

## Milking the Most \$\$ from Your Cows

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At least twice a day, 7 days a week your cows are milked. Can it be done in a way that will result in more milk production?

A milking procedure that provides a proper and consistent time lag between stimulating cows and attaching the milking machine will result in more milk production. One study found 811 pounds more milk in a 305 day lactation from cows that were milked with a consistent prep-lag time compared to an inconsistent one. Even a \$13 per hundredweight milk price means an additional \$1,054 per cow income. Over \$10,000 added income in a 100 cow herd. Not too bad for just doing a consistent job of milking day in and day out.

What is proper prep-lag time? The time between the start of stimulation and attachment of the milking unit should be 60 to 90 seconds. The prep-lag time on a dairy is going to depend upon the milking procedure being used and the number of cows being milked at one time.

An example milking procedure that I like is below. This is using a pre-dip with one person milking. Three or four cows are milked at a time.

### **First visit to cow**

(Stimulate and clean)

Gently brush loose soil and bedding from teats using clean gloved hand and/or towel.

Pre-dip technique

- Apply pre-dip to assure complete coverage of teat skin.
- Gently but firmly massage dip on teat skin.
- Gently but firmly rub across teat end with thumb until clean.
- Strip foremilk from each quarter and observe for abnormalities.

Allow at least **30 seconds** kill time for dip from time of application.

(During kill time, repeat these steps on next 2 or 3 cows)

### **Second visit to cow**

(wipe dry and attach)

Return to first cow within 40 to 60 seconds.

- Use clean towel with a gentle, twisting motion to ensure all dip is wiped off teat skin.
- Use other side of towel and thumb to firmly wipe across the teat ends.
- Immediately attach unit gently with minimal air admission

(Milker unit should be attached **within 60-90 seconds** from start of stimulation.

- Properly align unit to hang straight and square.
- Select 'automatic' mode for automatic take-offs.

(Repeat these steps on the next 2 or 3 cows already prepped)

### **Final visit to cow**

(detach and apply post-dip)

- For manual equipment, shut off claw vacuum and detach unit as the last quarter milks out.
- Apply post-dip as soon as practical after unit is detached covering **all** teat skin.

Is this the only way to properly milk cows?

NO, there are many ways to effectively milk cows.

Just keep a few simple principles in mind.

1. Milk clean, dry teats

Remember, you are producing a food product.

2. If pre-dip is used, it should be on the teats 30 seconds to allow time to kill bacteria.
3. Attach the milker unit to well stimulated teats.
4. Prep-lag time should be 60 to 90 seconds.
5. Attach unit gently with minimum air loss
6. Properly **align** unit to hang straight and square.
7. Immediately attend to squawking inflations, realignments and falloffs.
8. Post dip with a product containing an effective germicide. Be sure to cover all teat skin.
9. **BE Consistent!!** Milk cows the same way every milking, every day.