

# INTRODUCING DFO'S SELECTIVE DRY COW ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY PROJECT

*Editor's note: This article and the adjacent article have been provided by Dairy Farmers of Ontario's selective dry cow antibiotic therapy project team, including Ann Godkin, Guy Seguin, David Kelton, Richard Cantin, Cynthia Miltenburg, Robyn Elgie and Norm McNaughton.*

Periodically reviewing health management protocols is not a bad idea. Even though things may be going well, it's possible they could go even better. Antibiotic use is one aspect of dairy production that's under scrutiny by dairy customers. Given the heightened interest, producers should take a closer look at some of the practices they take for granted. Reviewing their use of antibiotics can help them fine-tune treatments, improve diagnostics and most importantly, enhance preventive practices so fewer animals will require treatment.

One widely adopted antibiotic use on dairy farms is the treatment of cows at dry-off with intramammary antibiotics. Dry cow treatment was introduced in the early days of mastitis prevention as part of the Five-Point Mastitis Prevention Program. Targeted mainly toward treating *Streptococcus agalactiae*, a highly contagious and difficult-to-identify infection, this strategy has been highly successful. At the inception of the five-

point program, more than 50 per cent of herds had cows infected with *Strep ag*. Now, testing data show it has been eradicated from all Ontario dairy farms and cows. Even better, low provincial bulk milk somatic cell count (SCC) this past year shows most herds have made excellent progress in controlling *Strep ag*, as well as a wide variety of other types of mastitis infections. After more than 60 years of dry cow antibiotic use, these improvements suggest it's time to see if the industry can reduce the proportion of cows that receive intramammary antibiotics at dry-off.

Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) has received funding from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) for a project that will help herd owners decide if a change to the selective dry cow therapy program (SDCT) is now warranted for their herd. The CAP is a five-year federal-provincial-territorial initiative. Representatives from DFO, Lactanet Canada, the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners (OABP), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ontario Veterinary College are working with Ceptor Consulting on this project. The SDCT project's goal is to help herd owners work with their veterinarian to conduct a standardized evaluation of their herd's overall management, which, combined with an assessment of

individual cow data and Lactanet dairy herd improvement records, can help them design modified dry cow treatment protocols. Teamwork is a key project element. Veterinarians can contribute their expertise based on information from the project, as well as working with multiple herds.

Project activities include the producer survey conducted in October, followed by a survey for veterinarians. These surveys provide information to fine-tune the content of the project's resources. A guidance protocol has been developed to help herd owners and vets review the risks associated with mastitis occurrence at the time of dry-off and calving that might have greater impact if there is a reduction in antibiotic use. Many herds already have good control of mastitis at these times. For others, completing the guidance protocol with their vet will help identify opportunities for improvement to keep mastitis risk low. As well, Lactanet will be providing two new reports, including a list of cows that are good candidates for no antibiotic treatment based on a standardized core protocol all producers can use.

Building on shared experiences and research from across Canada and around the world, the project will provide a variety of resources for producers and vets this winter. Working together, producers and vets can effectively assess herd status and suitability for selective dry cow treatment, provide ongoing support for making the changes identified in the assessment that decrease mastitis risk and, over time, continue to monitor the rates of mastitis occurrence in subsequent lactations. Stay tuned for further information as the project gets underway.

**NOTICE:** To keep Ontario dairy producers and other industry sectors informed, Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) publishes changes to its regulations. Complete regulations are available on DFO's website at [www.milk.org](http://www.milk.org).

DFO Regulation 13/19 replaces DFO Regulation 12/19 and was made to adjust the price of Special Milk Classes as a result of a Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) announcement, effective Dec. 1, 2019, as follows:

Class	Butterfat Price (\$/kg)		Protein Price (\$/kg)		Other Solids Price (\$/kg)	
	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old
5(a)	6.9879	7.2925	9.2179	8.3583	0.4208	0.5132
5(b)	6.9879	7.2925	2.6712	2.5551	2.6712	2.5551
5(c)	5.9518	5.9149	2.6465	2.4753	2.6465	2.4753



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DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO

## DID YOU KNOW?

Dairy Farmers of Canada has issued a new proAction Workbook and Reference Manual. The documents include biosecurity requirements in addition to food safety, animal care and livestock traceability. To access the Workbook, visit <http://bit.ly/3573NBs>, and to access the Reference Manual, visit <http://bit.ly/2CJzsNr>.



## FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL: BATTLING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

It's widely recognized the emergence of antimicrobial resistant (AMR) micro-organisms pose one of the greatest risks to human health worldwide, threatening the ability to effectively treat infectious diseases in people and animals. For example, if AMR is unchecked, routine operations, such as hip replacements or organ transplants, could become deadly because of the risk of untreatable infection.

All uses of antimicrobials can contribute to the development of resistance. To minimize AMR, it's essential the overall use of antimicrobials—both human and animal—is reduced, and best practices are developed and implemented for the responsible use of these drugs when they are needed.

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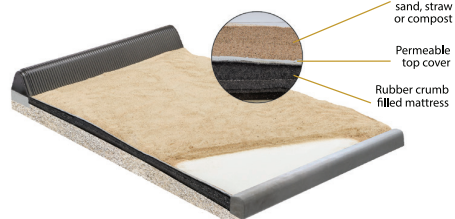
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## ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

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The World Health Organization's global action plan on AMR has highlighted the need for research and programs to guide prudent use and conduct animal health interventions utilizing new strategies to reduce the use of antimicrobials without compromising animal health and welfare. These objectives have also become a focus for Canada. Health Canada and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association have already set out to address AMR through regulatory changes and the development of the AMR Pan-Canadian Framework for Action.

The role livestock agriculture plays in the emergence of resistance has come under scrutiny in recent years. The American and Canadian Public Health Associations have released reports citing livestock agriculture as the most significant user of antimicrobials in North America—with more than 80 per cent of all antimicrobials consumed in the United States. Immediate action needs to be

taken to curb this level of use. All stakeholders, including livestock commodities, need to use antimicrobials responsibly and prudently.

The implementation of focused interventions in the dairy industry could have a significant impact on antimicrobial use. Antimicrobials such as ceftiofur are categorized as Category 1, or very high importance in terms of human medicine treatment, and are frequently used in dairy cow treatments. Working with herd veterinarians to review antimicrobial use on the farm is a helpful step each dairy producer can take to make a local difference to a global problem. Reviewing the overall management of dry cows for opportunities to prevent mastitis can reduce the need for dry cow antibiotic treatment on many farms. A standardized protocol for selecting cows to treat can ensure the cows that need treatment continue to receive it while healthy ones don't.

For more information on the AMR Pan-Canadian Framework for Action, visit <http://bit.ly/2q2FaHj>.

## DFO ELECTION RESULTS

The ballot count for Dairy Farmers of Ontario's (DFO) 2019 election for the board member in Region 4 and byelection for the board member in Region 9 were held on Nov. 12, 2019, in accordance with the procedures detailed in Ontario Regulation 760, as amended, made under the *Milk Act*.

The candidates receiving the largest number of eligible votes was Adam Petherick in Region 4, and Vicky Morrison in Region 9.

DFO's board, at a meeting held via conference call on Nov. 12, 2019, declared Petherick elected to serve as board member for Region 4 for a four-year term commencing immediately following the adjournment of DFO's annual general meeting on Jan. 16, 2020.

DFO's board also declared Morrison elected to serve as board member for Region 9 for the remainder of the four-year term, commencing immediately following the adjournment of DFO's annual general meeting on Jan. 12, 2017.

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