



# AMR BULLETIN

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## Selective Dry Cow Therapy – an overview

Selective Dry Cow Therapy (SDCT) represents an intentional approach to the selection and use of dry cow antibiotics and/or teat sealants, as opposed to the blanket use of intra-mammary antibiotics at drying off. As antimicrobial resistance poses a major challenge to human and animal health, SDCT represents progress towards increasingly responsible use of antimicrobials, as it involves giving an internal teat sealant alone to suitable cows at drying off, with the rest of the herd receiving an antibiotic tube (to treat existing infections and prevent new ones) as well as the internal teat sealant.

SDCT can work very well when it is planned for and carried out properly with excellent hygiene, however it can lead to problems if it is not carried out with attention to detail.

### Essential considerations for an SDCT protocol:

- Engagement with your own vet and dairying adviser
- Regular milk recording, including at least one recording in the month before drying off to allow sub-clinical infections to be detected and evidence of a low prevalence of infection based on:
  - bulk milk Somatic Cell Count (SCC), ideally with a monthly SCC of <200,000 cells per ml
  - low rate of new infections in the dry period
- Recording of all mastitis cases
- Bacteriology results from mastitis cases (clinical and sub-clinical)
- Accurate recording of drying off date and drying off treatments for each cow
- Excellent hygiene practices from drying off to calving.

### Criteria for teat sealer only ('lower risk' cows)

- Low somatic cell count history (note that heifers may have a lower threshold)
- No history of clinical mastitis
- No teat lesions.

**All other cows should receive an appropriate dry cow tube as well as an internal teat sealant.**

### Good hygiene practices are critical when administering Dry Cow Therapy:

- Use the California Milk Test to check for any current infections
- Ensure hands are clean and dry (wear gloves)
- Clean teat ends with alcohol-soaked cotton wool and dry them
- Teat dip after treating
- Identify cows and record treatment



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