


7. SMART FARMS HAVE TREATMENT PROTOCOLS

Treatment protocols are used to define standard treatments for common diseases on dairy farms. Treatment protocols are advocated when multiple people have responsibility for administering antibiotic treatments to dairy cattle or when extralabel drug use is prescribed. Extralabel drug use is any use of drugs that is not specifically mentioned on the product label. Examples of extralabel drug use include: 3 tubes of an intramammary tube when the product label prescribes 2 tubes; use of intramammary tubes at 8 hour intervals when the product label prescribes 24 hour intervals; use of Excenel® IM for any indication besides bovine respiratory disease or footrot; or dosage of 40 cc penicillin SQ when the label dosage is 13 cc SQ. A requirement for legal extralabel drug use in food animals is the existence of a valid veterinarian/client/patient relationship (VCPR). A key requirement of the VCPR is that “the veterinarian has assumed the responsibility of making medical judgments regarding the health of the animals and the need for medical treatment ***and the client (owner or caretaker) has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian.***” Documentation (such as clinical mastitis records) of extralabel drug usage is required. Treatment protocols provide a mechanism for increased communication about treatment plans between the veterinarian and client and allow the farm to partially fulfill requirements for legal extralabel drug use. The use of treatment protocols is highly associated with adoption of clinical mastitis records and longer milk discard times. Farms participating in the WI quality teams that had treatment protocols were 6.5 times more likely to maintain clinical mastitis records and discarded milk for one-half day longer. Treatment protocols can be simple (Table 2) but should be defined by consultation between the local veterinarian, farm owner and key animal caretakers.

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Table 2. Example of Treatment Protocol for Clinical Mastitis

Clinical Signs			
Abnormal milk only	Give oxytocin, put leg band on	Use ¼ milker for 2 milkings	Recheck, remove band if normal, take sterile culture if not normal
Abnormal milk PLUS swollen udder	Give oxytocin, put leg band on	Freeze sterile milk sample; give 1 intramammary tube after each milking for 2 RX, Put in Sick Pen	
Abnormal milk PLUS swollen udder or PLUS temp > 103, off feed, down in milk	Give oxytocin, put leg band on	Freeze sterile milk sample; give 1 intramammary tube after each milking for 2 RX, 2 aspirin, Put in Sick Pen	Recheck 2 hours later, give 31 hypertonic saline if temp > 103.5, CALL VET if not improved 2 hours after saline
Down & Dehydrated			CALL VET