

## Farm Policy – “Milking is an exercise in contentment”\*

On our farm ....

Cows are milked every day in a way so that they remain content, productive and healthy.

All milking tasks are completed calmly and consistently by all staff at every milking so that cows get used to the routine to help milking run smoothly.

## Operating Procedure

1. **Milking yard** – Ensure there is enough space for the size of the herd before closing the entry gate (1.3 sq. m /Jersey, 1.5 sq. m/Friesian)
2. **Backing gate** –
  - Don't move the gate for at least 20 minutes or until at least three rotations have been milked to ensure enough space in the yard for the herd to rearrange into a milking order.
  - Move the gate little (maximum of one metre) and often **to take up the space in the yard** and to keep cows flowing into the bail entry area.
  - Gate speed maximum of 12m/min in round yards, 6m/min in rectangular yards.
3. **Top gate** -
  - Maximum speed the same as the backing gate.
  - All staff must operate the gate with exactly the same method because cows are animals of routine. One example is the “5-cupping method”, where five cows are cupped between each action of the gate (after lifting the chains, moving the gate back, dropping the chains, moving the gate forward) .
  - **The top gate must never be used to push cows (even if not powered).**
4. **.Stay at cups-on** –
  - Call the cows on to the platform using a gentle tone (eg. “Come on girls”).
  - If a cow hesitates, step backwards from the cupping position to encourage her to enter.
  - Avoid eyeballing cows.
  - Milkers should only enter the yard away from the entry bridge area and only when absolutely necessary (for example the last group of cows).
5. **Udder preparation** –
  - If the cows teats are:
    - a) Clean and dry - go ahead and cup
    - b) Dry but dirty - wipe first then cup
    - c) Wet and dirty - wash and dry then cup

## 6. The Platform

- Set the platform speed to suit your cupping speed.
- **Don't** back the platform up for cows, keep the platform moving.
- **Do** stop the platform if there is a risk of a cow or human getting hurt or when training cows to exit the platform.
- **Don't** allow cows any 'free riding'. All cows should exit after the clusters are taken off.

7. **In-bail feeders** – check that the feed is flowing correctly throughout milking.

## 8. Milking behavior –

- Keep milking calm and relaxed.
- **No shouting, no loud whistling,**

9. **Teat spraying** – all cows teats are sprayed after every milking. Spray to cover all surfaces of all the teats.

10. **Hosing down during milking.** Keep the bridge and platform clean during milking.

11. **Cow health** – draft and record any cows that look lame or sick for checking after milking.

## 12. The milking plant –

- Listen and watch the plant throughout milking to make sure it is working properly.
- Keep the radio volume low. It is best to have no radio if there is disagreement between milkers on which station to listen to.

Disclaimer: All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the material in this article, however, the use of this information is at one's own risk and VETSL disclaims all responsibility for losses, costs, damages etc incurred as a result of the use of the information contained in this article.

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