Mastitis Myths Part 2
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This month we will continue our discussion on mastitis, one of the most frustrating diseases that plague dairy cows. Last month, we discussed why it is important to follow the label on intramammary treatments and the purpose of systemic antibiotics in mastitis treatment. This month we will discuss other common myths.

One such myth is that “I can ignore grade 1 clinical mastitis.” Grade 1 mastitis refers to cases where abnormal milk is the only sign. Sometimes grade 1 mastitis is referred to as “mild” which might sound like it is less important. However, grade 1 mastitis cases are just as likely as grade 2 cases to raise somatic cell count (SCC), reduce milk production, and become chronic cases. Furthermore, 50% or more cases of mastitis on a farm are grade 1. If you ignore all grade 1 mastitis, you could be ignoring more than 50% of your mastitis cases. Forestripping is key to examining milk and identifying grade 1 mastitis in the parlor. Work with your veterinarian to create a protocol for addressing grade 1 cases on your dairy.

Another common misconception: “her milk still looked abnormal after treating her, so my treatment did not work and I need to use another kind of tube.” In most cases of mastitis, milk will return to its normal appearance in 4-7 days, regardless of whether the infection was cured. Use the SCC and not the milk’s appearance to determine if the infection has been cured.

With new research, new bugs, and changing antibiotic rules, mastitis remains an ongoing challenge on today’s dairy farms. Stay up-to-date by discussing mastitis and milk quality with your veterinarian.

Access the archive of past milk quality columns here: http://www.dairymed.com/Milk-Quality-Columns.html