

Spring Cleaning

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Spring is in the air despite the snow on the ground! For most people this means cleaning the house, but perhaps your dairy may benefit from sprucing up. Areas that may benefit from attention include milking protocols, equipment cleaning, and facility maintenance to help improve your profitability. The following is a list of places to start. Happy spring cleaning!

- Calves
 - If you pasteurize whole milk for calves, now is a good time ensure the pasteurizer is working properly and do a thorough cleaning, including all valves and pipes. Calf milk cultures are a useful tool to check the effectiveness of the pasteurizer and cleanliness of collection. Continue to clean and sanitize your collection pails and pasteurizer after each use.
 - Check calf feeding equipment and replace buckets with scratches or cracks and replace worn calf nipples and bottles. Also check your tube feeder for scratches or cracks. Worn feeding equipment is very difficult to clean well.
- Heifers
 - Chip away manure that may interfere with bunk space to prevent hoof issues.
 - Pitch out feed bunks with old feed in them to avoid spoilage and mold buildup.
- Cows
 - Scrub all water buckets, tanks and drinking cups. You can use diluted bleach to clean. Because milk is approximately 87% water, poor-quality water can be a limiting factor for how much milk cows produce.
 - Evaluate milking equipment function and revisit milking routine procedures for optimum production and teat health.
 - Prepare for the summer heat by making necessary repairs on sprinklers, soakers, and fans.
 - Scrape any manure that was too frozen in the winter to move to keep cows as clean as possible and to prevent injury.
- General
 - Does the farm meet all standards set in the state's farm inspection manual? Are repairs needs in the milk house, barn/freestalls, or parlor? Are equipment and utensils stored properly? Do curtains need cleaning and repairing?
 - Go through the dairy medicine inventory. Discard outdated products and restock. Also ensure that products for lactating and nonlactating cattle are stored separately and locations are labeled.
 - Fridge audit. Clean fridge and sure fridge temperature settings are correct. Avoid keeping vaccines in the door as this area experiences the most temperature fluctuation.