



Decreasing Your SCC Through Bulk Tank Sampling.

Milk quality is paramount to having a productive dairy and can be maintained through routine monitoring such as utilizing bulk tank cultures. However, when milk quality issues begin to arise bulk tank cultures can also be very beneficial to further understanding the current issue. Bulk tank cultures obtained over 3-5 days once per month (or more frequently) are not only helpful in solving milk quality issues but also represent a very useful monitoring tool for your dairy.

Bulk tank sampling has two specific uses:

- Monitoring for contagious mastitis pathogens:
 - Pathogens: *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus agalactiae*, *Mycoplasma* sp.
 - Presence of these pathogens on bulk tank sample will allow further identification of the offending cows through string and individual quarter sampling and ultimately allow treatment and culling decisions to be made to ensure your herd remains free of contagious mastitis organisms.
- Monitoring environmental hygiene associated with milking:
- Pathogens: Coliforms, coagulase negative staphylococcus and environmental streptococcus
- Elevated presence of any of these pathogens indicate hygiene problems somewhere in the milking process:
 - Milking equipment cleanliness issue
 - Poor or inconsistent udder preparation at milking
 - Cleanliness in alleys, holding pens, and cow comfort
- All of these areas present a risk for infection and compromised milk quality

How to obtain bulk tank samples:

- Serial samples are obtained aseptically from the bulk tank over 3-5 days
 - Obtain each sample from the top of the tank after agitation – Freeze Immediately
 - ****If not frozen immediately, sample may report artificially high bacterial counts****
- Bring collection of frozen samples to MVS – we will pool samples together to create a representation of the bulk tank over the days sampled

Our pricing for in house cultures:

- Bulk Tank Culturing - \$35/pooled culture without *Mycoplasma*
- Individual Cow Culture - \$8/sample

Bulk tank culturing can offer a lot to your farm, but it is best utilized in combination with individual cow/quarter sampling, string sampling, and parlor evaluations. All of these diagnostics can help maintain low somatic cell count, decrease antibiotic usage in the parlor, and capitalize on elevated production from healthy cows.

Contact us for additional information or to answer any questions you may have.