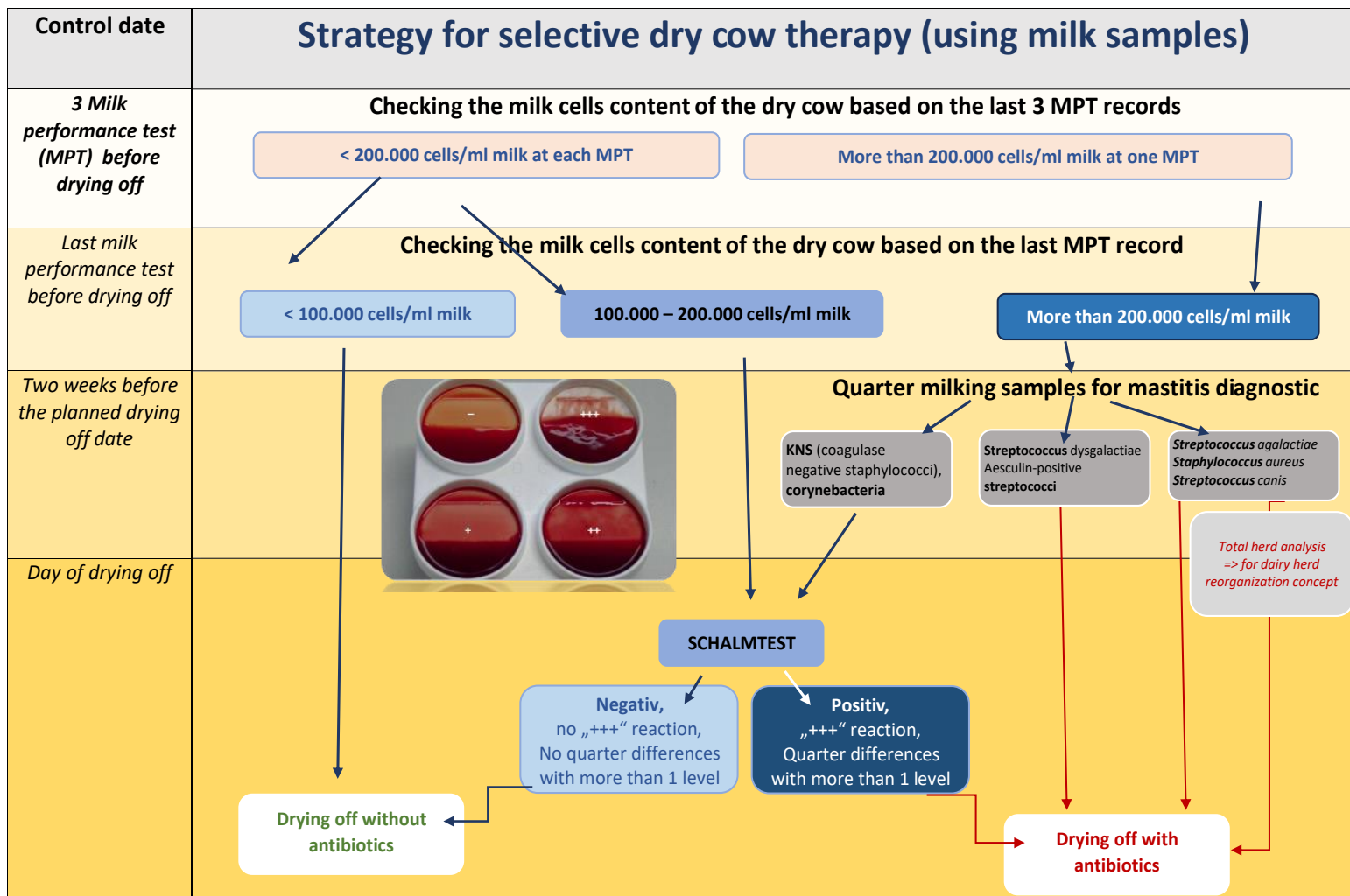


Environment, Animal Welfare, society friendly



Background

The spread of antibiotic resistance has become a major public health problem. Dryers are antibiotic-containing drugs that are used in milk production to dry off dairy cows, i.e. to switch them to the non-lactating phase. The selective drying-off of dairy cows means that not all cows are systematically dried off with antibiotics, but only cows with health problems. Selective drying off therefore makes a significant contribution to reducing the use of antimicrobials in milk production (according to estimates: 50% of cows could be dried off without antibiotics).



General advice on drying off:

- Dry off dairy cows for a period of 45-60 days
  - dry period too short => risk of reduced colostrum quality
  - dry period too long => risk of fatty degeneration of the dairy cow
  - Allow first-calf cows a dry period of 60 days rather than longer
- Which method to use: abrupt drying off or progressive drying off?
 

The method is not as decisive for udder health as the milk yield of the cow on the day of drying off: a maximum milk yield of 12kg/cow/day is recommended as optimal => Adjust feeding at the end of lactation

Excessively high milk yields 2-3 weeks before drying off also prevent the formation of a good quality keratin plug, which closes the teat canal so that no bacteria can penetrate during the dry period.
- Only cows that have healthy udders at the time of drying off are suitable for drying off without antibiotics
- Prevent poor teat conditions (bulging teat canal, hyperkeratosis)
 

=> otherwise increased risk of udder inflammation in the dry period
- Extremely meticulous hygiene is required for drying off in general, but especially for selective drying off (clean, disinfected teats and hands when handling the animal, clean bedding and lying surfaces) => hygiene errors are compensated for by the effect of the antibiotic when using dryers and are therefore not directly noticeable to the farmer
- The use of an internal teat sealer is always advisable



Quote of a farmer:

"The core problem lies in not simply using dryers for every cow, but deciding on a cow-by-cow basis whether their use is necessary at all."

Assessment of method

