

# Twist and Flip to a Lower Somatic Cell Count

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Well managed dairy herds frequently have significant clinical mastitis problems due to Strep species, Staph species and other common environmental organisms. In addition, somatic cell counts in these same types of herds frequently are higher than management would like to see. Properly cleaning teat ends prior to unit attachment will significantly reduce the incidence of common environmental mastitis cases.

Bulk tank cultures are often used to monitor milker performance. The goal is to have the quantitative bulk tank culture Strep species count below 750 colonies. In addition, coliform counts should also be below 25. Properly cleaning teat ends will allow producers to achieve

bulk tank counts in this range.

Drying teats is the most important aspect of udder preparation. Cow towels should be grasped in the drying hand and then one circular, aggressive motion made on each teat, one after the other in sequence until all four teats are dry. Cow towels should then be flipped in the milker's hands to expose a clean section of the towel before going back underneath the cow and aggressively pinching the teat end between the thumb and the first two fingers on the drying hand. The objective is to have the teat end clean, dry, and stimulated when the units are attached to the cow.