

Sterile Milk Sampling

Sterile milk sampling techniques must be used when collecting milk samples for culturing for microorganisms that cause mastitis. Non-sterile collection of milk leads to errors in diagnosis of the causes of mastitis and a waste of time and money. Use the following suggested steps to avoid contaminating milk samples for culture.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Sterile Sample Tubes
- Marking Pen (waterproof)
- Cotton balls or gauze pads
- 70% alcohol (isopropyl rubbing alcohol)
- Paper Towels
- Container to hold sample tubes
- Ice chest or refrigerator/freezer



1. Label sterile tube with cow identification, date, and quarter sampled.



2. Udder should be clean and dry.



3. Scrub the end of each teat with a gauze pad or cotton ball soaked in 70% alcohol. Sanitize teats farthest away first, then nearest teats.



4. Beginning with the nearest teat to be sampled, remove 1-2 streams of milk from each teat.



5. Hold the sterile sample tube and remove the cap without contaminating it.



6. Hold tube at an angle to prevent debris from entering the tube. Do not allow the tube to touch the end of the teat. Squirt several streams of milk into the tube. Do not fill tube completely.



7. Replace the cap and place the tube in refrigeration. Freeze samples if being stored.

Repeat steps 4 through 7, one teat at a time, moving from nearest teat to farthest.