

# MASTITIS CONTROL PLAN

## QuarterPRO approach



Mastitis is one of the most common health problems on dairy farms. Its treatment and control is one of the largest costs to the British dairy industry and it is a very painful condition and results in lower production, increased costs and a poorer-quality product. There is a greater need to use antibiotic treatments if mastitis control is poor. QuarterPRO is an industry initiative to promote and improve udder health.

QuarterPRO is a four-step process

<b>1. PREDICT</b>	<b>2. REACT</b>
Analyse data	Decide what to do
<b>3. OPTIMISE</b>	<b>4. REVIEW</b>
Take action on farm	Check results

1. Sit down with the farm team and advisors once a quarter – review clinical mastitis and somatic cell count data. Use the Mastitis Pattern Analysis Tool to **PREDICT** the most important udder health issues on farm in next quarter.
2. Identify key management areas to be addressed and **REACT** by deciding on management changes:
  - use AHDB pattern specific resources
3. Work together as a team to **OPTIMISE** udder health.
4. **REVIEW** on a quarterly basis to monitor progress and changes in udder health patterns.

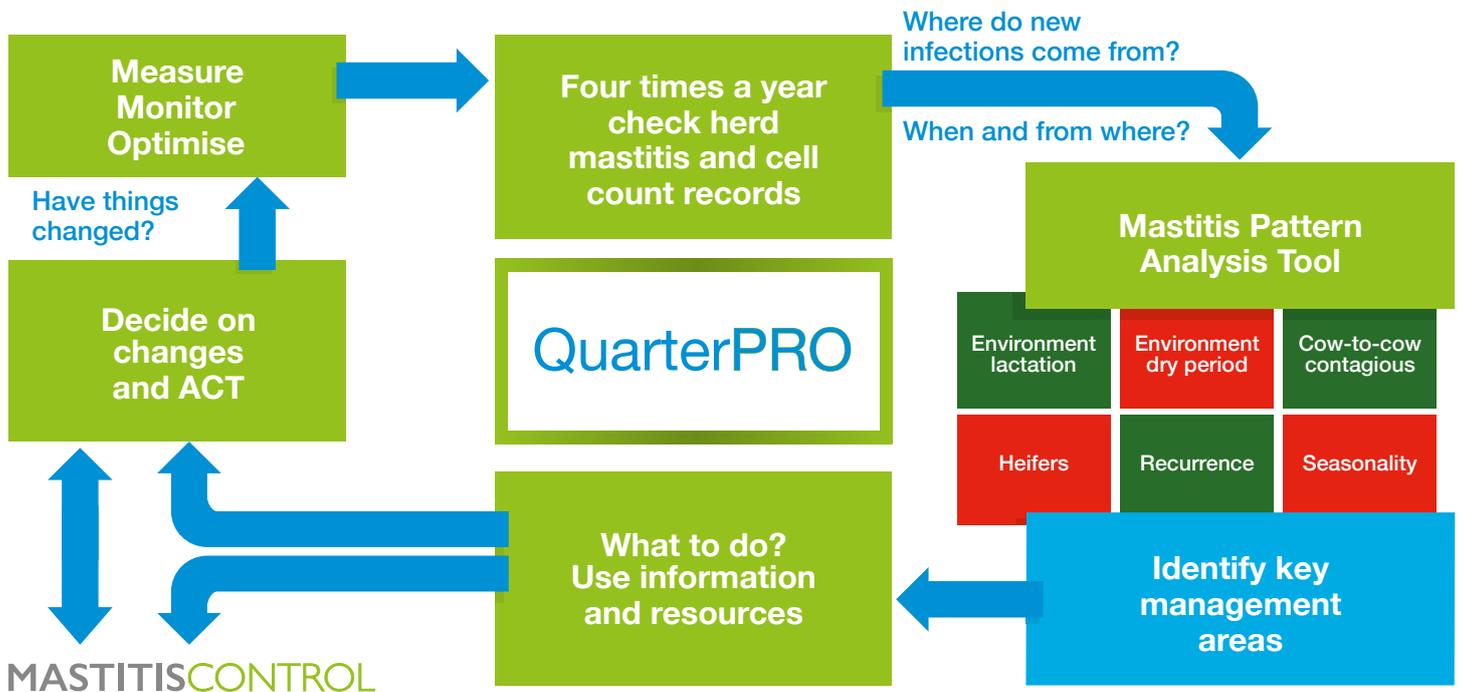


Figure 1. Flow chart of QuarterPRO process

## Materials and tools developed for QuarterPRO

1. The QMMS/SUM-IT CDL converter tool which prepares individual cow somatic cell count data from your milk-recording organisation and clinical mastitis data so it can be easily imported in to the AHDB Dairy Mastitis Pattern Analysis Tool.
2. The AHDB Dairy Mastitis Pattern Analysis Tool, which identifies the herd mastitis pattern, and includes pointers to key management areas for different situations.
3. Resources in the form of factsheets and videos providing information on mastitis management.

## The QuarterPRO process

### 1. Evaluation of data

QuarterPRO begins with the quarterly analysis of farm mastitis data. It is important to get the interpretation of herd mastitis and somatic cell count data right. The Mastitis Pattern Analysis Tool is an automated, rapid tool, which can be used for the analysis of mastitis data.

The Pattern Analysis Tool takes information directly from milk-recording data. The tool is more accurate when it has both clinical mastitis and somatic cell count records and the report shows the most important pattern of mastitis in your herd currently.

### 2. Identification of key areas

The next step is to identify the underlying cause of the pattern of mastitis you have on your farm. The farm team reviews the areas of management that are important for improving udder health with the pattern of mastitis in your herd. For example, if the pattern is mainly environmental mastitis associated with the dry period, you would review management of the winter dry cow environment. If the problem is complex, using the full AHDB Dairy Mastitis Control Plan is recommended.

AHDB has produced a range of resources in print and online ([www.dairy.ahdb.org.uk/mastitis](http://www.dairy.ahdb.org.uk/mastitis)) that provide key information on steps to improve udder health. Resources are available for the following areas:

- Dry cow management
- Lactating period environmental mastitis management
- Lactating period contagious mastitis management
- Heifer mastitis management

The farm team and advisors can use these and other resources to decide what to do in the next quarter to reduce the risks associated with the main current pattern of mastitis in the herd.

### 3. Action

Once the farm team has agreed what to do, the next step is to agree how to make the changes. It is important that everyone working on the farm knows what to do, how to do it and why you do it. Then do it. It is a good idea to quickly check once a week how well the action plan is being followed (it will take some time before impact will be measurable and there may be little to see week to week).

## 4. Quarterly reassessment

The data analysis needs to be repeated quarterly. This will allow evaluation of the impact of any actions taken and the detection of any seasonal patterns, improvements or deterioration, or alteration in the mastitis pattern, and thus direct any further actions required. If the mastitis problem is complex or if you want to make more rapid progress in mastitis control, the AHDB Dairy Mastitis Control Plan is recommended.

## AHDB Dairy Mastitis Control Plan

The AHDB Dairy Mastitis Control Plan is a mastitis prevention and control service. It is based on research carried out on British dairy farms. The University of Nottingham continues to develop and update the technical information in the AHDB Dairy Mastitis Control Plan. Every plan is specific for the farm on which it was developed and is a cost-effective way of improving mastitis control. The plan deliverers who provide the service are trained vets and consultants (<http://mastitiscontrolplan.co.uk/plan-deliverer-map>).

Plan deliverers use a farm's milk-recording data, clinical records and on-farm questionnaires and observations to identify the main factors contributing to mastitis on that farm. This information is used to produce a farm-specific set of practical recommendations. The plan deliverer and farm staff work together to develop the plan to reduce mastitis on the farm. A date for review is agreed, usually three months from the first visit.

The plan is reviewed on a regular basis as it takes time for the actions to be successful. A willingness to change management practices and other areas of the farm, if needed, is essential. In trials, there was a 36% reduction in mastitis on farms that followed all of the advice, compared with farms that implemented two thirds of the advice, which had a 20% reduction in mastitis.

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