

BULK MILK TANK SAMPLING

Culture testing of milk from a bulk tank can provide a lot of information. The value of the information provided is influenced by the quality of the sample collected and how it is delivered to the lab. Carefully following these instructions can make a lot of difference. Since bacterial shedding is subject to considerable daily variation, sampling at the same time for five consecutive days is required. The procedure is as follows:

1. Allow the agitator to run until milk in the tank is thoroughly mixed (10-15 minutes).
2. Collect your sample from the top of the tank. Never collect milk from the bottom outlet!
NOTE: Be careful not to have pens, tools, debris in your pockets or a hat that can drop into the milk when you reach into the tank to collect a sample.
3. Remove a sterile transfer pipet from its case. Do not touch its tip to anything other than the milk.
4. Squeeze the bulb once to collect a pipet full of milk.
5. Carefully tear off the top of the whirl bag along the perforation. Open the whirl bag by pulling on the white tabs only.
NOTE: Do not let anything touch the new edges that will be the opening of the bag.
6. Squirt the milk into the whirl bag while holding the bag as horizontal as possible.
NOTE: Holding the bag horizontally will reduce the dust or debris floating into the opening while you squirt the milk into it.
7. Close the bag immediately.
NOTE: This is done by holding onto the ends of the yellow ties and folding the top repeatedly over the yellow ties until the bag only has a small air space over the milk. Then bend the end of the ties into the middle to clamp the top shut.
8. Place the sample in a freezer right after closing the bag. Any delay in freezing may ruin the sample.
9. Sample at the same time each day for five consecutive days.
NOTE: Be very careful not to contaminate any of the samples. Each new sample is collected with a new sterile transfer pipet following the procedure described above.
10. Ship frozen sample and enclosed form to the laboratory.
** Please ask your veterinary clinic if they are willing to prepare it for transport.
** If this is not possible, please call me and I will see about making other arrangements.
NOTE: Before taking the sample to the clinic, call them so that you know they are expecting you and will be available to take the sample from you. Do not let the sample thaw.

Bulk milk tank culturing will be set up at the lab on Tuesday only each week, so the samples must be at the lab no later than noon on Tuesday. Results will be available late Friday afternoon.

Please call if you have any problems or questions about collecting and delivering a bulk milk tank sample.

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