Tip of the month – September 2016

Risks on high Somatic Cell counts.

We’re in the time again of higher somatic cell counts. It is crucial that you know what the causes are.

Are they cow-related or environment-related bacteria?

For example, an Aureus (cow-related bacteria) cow, which is very contagious and difficult to control, needs to have a very good reason why she is still walking around on your dairy with this milk price.
Aureus is difficult to treat well and very contagious! In the cow monitor it is quite easy to recognize because of its high peaks and lows in the graph.

Uberis is the most common environment-related bacteria. You can spot Uberis by noticing the cow has a high cell count but relatively little increase in the graph.

Environment-related bacteria are easily spread throughout the barn, boxes, manure and dirty milking equipment.

With the monthly milk test, you get a list of somatic cell numbers, split into heifers, 2nd calf and older cows but also columns for the first days after calving and later periods during lactation.

Again, a lot can be learned from this: are there many fresh cows with a high cell count the first month after calving? Was the place where they calved clean enough, did they eat and drink fast enough after calving? Haven’t they been calved in good conditions? (to fat or thin, or … it’s all possible)

Or if there are too many cows that peak with cells in

lactation between 60-150 days, this could come from too long period of negative energy balance which in turn would cause them to be to weakened to resist a bacteria-attack.

Or do heifers already have a high cell number? This is often CNS: a collection of cow bound and environment-related bacteria. This may have to do with young cattle rearing, but also due to the fact that they live in in old stables which is no longer suitable as a clean and comfortable habitable environment due to neglect. Also old drinking watersystems which doesn’t flow as quickly as it should is a paradise for bacteria and can cause CNS. As a result, they often have an infection even before the calving is incurred.

All dairies have bacteria. Which bacteria gets a chance on your dairy?