Tips to get connected better

October 2025:

Too many kick-offs?

It’s normal for a few cows to occasionally kick off a teat cup. But when does this become more than normal?
If more heifers have calved, it’s logical that the kick-off percentage is slightly higher.
Less than 2% is okay, but it shouldn’t exceed 5% too often!
The number of kick-offs can therefore fluctuate considerably.
Which cows kick off most often can be found in the “Milking performance” list.

What are the possible causes?
Common causes include flies or a batch of heifers, for example, from a particular bull.
But sometimes a milking robot doesn’t connect properly, not correctly from the center of the teat. With multiple milking robots, you’ll see differences in kick-offs from one robot to the next.
In that case, it’s easy for a technician to correct this.
But claw problems, especially on the leg on the side where the robot connects, also cause more kick-offs or stepping on a hose. Or the VMS arm may have difficulty reaching the udder teats.
A feeder setting that is too narrow or too wide can lead to more kicking from restless cows.
And of course, the quality of the teat liners, a clean camera that connects smoothly, the feeding speed, pre-treatment cup, and temperature are also important factors.
It’s also interesting to see whether cows, besides new heifers, also older cows, and perhaps even cows in later lactation, still kick. Then we look at factors like teat quality, how and with what you fill the boxes, what you use for disinfection, the vacuum level, and the settings for the

take-off from the milkcup.
Also the feeding speed and the feed intake per milking session. Have they finished their feed before milking begins, for example?

October 2020:

Possibilities for cows that have problems to attach the teat cups.

Incomplete milking is always annoying! Finding the teats with difficulty not only results in loss of time but also annoyance, both for the farmer and for the cow.
On top of that, the risk of udder infections also increases.

Several Tips have already been written about incomplete milking's. With the VMS Classic we aim for a percentage of incomplete milking's of less than 5%. With the VMS V300 we believe that this percentage should be below 2%.

What is well known is that you should keep the camera clean, even in the top corners, having no space on the arm and should neatly connect the teat in the middle of the cup.

In the lists, under "Milking Info", the list "Milking performance" is included. By sorting on incomplete milking's, the penultimate column, you can see exactly which cows have incomplete milking's most often.

Over the years I have compiled a list of 14 points for the VMS Classic, and 10 points for the VMS V300 that can help assess and possibly use the settings of the individual cow to try for better attach in the future.

This is often issued during company visits, if you do not have it (anymore), or if you want an update, just send an email and I will send it to you.

Please state for which type of VMS you'd like to receive these points.

August 2020:

The Feeder Position.

With the VMS V300, the teat positions no longer need to be adjusted. With the VMS Classic, that is precisely the moment to, in addition to the teat positions, position of the feed trough is set for a new cow or after calving. This setting is (afterwards) only adjustable by the farmer. So it is still important to keep an eye on it afterwards.

With the VMS V300 it is no longer important for to find the teats, but similarly, too much or especially too little space in the VMS is not good either.

With the VMS Classic, leaving too much space in the VMS box means it will be more difficult to find teats, but too tight is not good either.

So keep paying attention: is the cow comfortable in the VMS? It is also possible to check whether the feed trough is in the correct position via VMS Animal Settings.

January 2016:

Better milking good udders.

You might sometimes notice that the VMS has trouble attaching the liners to a cow with a good udder and good teat placement.

It is quite probable that something went wrong during the last milking('s) which resulted in saving the wrong teat positions.

Simply one more time teaching the cow again is the best

advice.
Ensure that the grippers are perfectly under the teat.

And teaching a teat: where the laser once was calibrated halfway on the teat, it must now be adjusted at the lowest tip of the teat!

December 2015:

Udder hair shave

It is surprising how fast hair currently grows on the udder!

On our “Work routine” list is written that it is advised to burn or shave hair on the udder every two months.
In the fall and winter, because hair grows more quickly, it is advised to shave or burn the hairs more often.

It is also suggested that you shave all of the hair on the tail and plume with what hangs on it. (That is often the cause for a “dirty” cow, which is also not hygienic, and dirt goes everywhere)

It is also advised to wipe the camera lens with a cloth containing descaling liquid.
This will result in quicker connections, and makes the cow and thereafter the manager being happier.
Good descaling liquid always needs to work itself in, so make sure to let it sit for a while!
Do not immediately wipe off and rinse.

November 2015:

Teat cup centre

The teat cup and also the pretreatment cup, have to start right under the teat.

The distance from teat cup to camera is programmed.
If this is not quite the required 100%, the connection with a good teat position usually still works well.
However, it does not fit so well with a cow with slanted teats or teats with a different shape or position.

So, pay good attention if the teat is in the center and above the cup if it needs to connect properly.

If it is not sufficient, go to the touch screen and go to VMS Menu => Robot => Calibrate (third tab) execute “center cup”.

Otherwise, contact your mechanic.

August 2015:

Are black teats a problem?

Of course, black teats have their disadvantages.

But:

- Hair on the udders do too;
- A dirty camera does too;
- Lime scale on the camera does too;
- A dirty or worn sponge does too;
- Deviating teat shape or an abnormal udder shape does too;
- A narrow teat shape or a milk vein right along the teat does too;
- Cows with hoof problems are moving all the time;
- Technically seen, a bad VMS, extra space on the arm or that it moves to slow or too fast does too;
- The manure plate that doesn’t work well also has its disadvantages;
- Cows that have little room or too much room in the VMS does too;
- Old or too big liners do too;

- To many flies do too.

One disadvantage is OK for the VMS, 2 or 3 can be OK to but it has to stop at some point…
Some cows simply have certain characteristics and there's not much we can do about it.

If we can minimalize or deplete some of the disadvantages which are in our hand, we can make that as few as possible cows have problems .

We want, and can achieve the lowest number of incomplete milking's!

So black teats or abnormal teats …, it is not a problem by itself but if it is a summation than it certainly will become one!

May 2015:

More kick-offs this year?

It seems that this past year more cows and heifers are being annoying in the VMS than other years. Heifers also seem to have more edema this year than previous years.
Make sure that these animals don't receive a ration that is too generous/rich or get too much salt before they calve, and if it is possible at all give them more space for exercise.

Notice if they are from the same family, or have the same dad.

When they come into the robot and they are annoyed, there are some possibilities:
Even though we find precleaning at DeLaval great, we might need to postpone it for these animals (for example: a week and then build up to normal?).
Give them the space, feeder setting, they deserve

If needed put the milking cups on manually the first few times. The next step is that you also manually attach the rear cups and let the machine do the front cups, but if the cow is calm than let the VMS attach all the cups. It is very important for these animals, especially when edema or a hard udder is present and is that they are being milked three times a day!

A full udder is then very painful and they connect the pain with the VMS so they will not to go to the VMS again if they get hurt!

Note also that liners and preparation cup are good. Maybe you could even let the feed come a little slower (from 100% back to 75%) so that the cows are kept busy a little bit longer with the food while being milked.

December 2014:

Requirements to Teatdip

It’s December again and it can get colder so be extra alert when looking at the condition of the teats.

Cows don’t like to be milked when they have sensitive and/or rough teats, especially when it’s cold. Both the milking technique and spraying have enormous influence on it.
And it will give more problems with cold and humid weather.

Also make sure the teats are hit well with the spray and if whether your disinfectant spray also has sufficient “skin care”.

Be sure to check other tips that have been placed on the site in previous years about what to do when it’s cold outside.

November 2014:

Performance Index

On the DelPro Management program you can find in the Reports in Default Rapports => Milking Info => Milking Performance.

De last column is called the Performance Index. This index indicates how well the VMS attaches the teat cups to the cow. Above the 100 is good and above the 130 is better, above 150 is best. Under the 100 is not so good. If you sort on this column you will immediately recognize the highest and lowest cows. A cow gets a 0 if you often manually attach the teat cups.

The “lowest” cow needs to be checked to see if there aren’t other attachment options or adjusting the milk permission can give improvements. You might need to teach the cow again…, it saves a lot of time and has big influence on robot’s capacity. And it has a big influence on the fun for the cow and the farmer!

A few columns to the left show the average of how long a cow spends time in the VMS. These 2 obviously have something to do with each other.

February 2014:

Three teat set well?

With a three-teat milking cow the fourth teat will gradually dry up en will gradually be less easy for the robot (lasers) to be seen or the lasers will no longer distinguish the teat from the udder.

Especially with drying up front-teats it can be difficult because the robot uses it’s positions to find the back-teats. You will see the robot arm searching for a long time or even

on the wrong place.

On the COWCARD in “VMS Settings” uncheck “existing teat” and it the machine will find the other three teats a whole lot easier!

January 2014:

Save teat positions

It will take about 3-10 seconds after the robot arm has grabbed a milking cup and attaches a teat. That’s fine, nice and smooth and then the data from the teat positions are saved each time so that the VMS follows the changing udder and continues being smoothly connected.

If the time frame of the attachment exceeds 15 seconds, the teat positions will not correctly be saved because the positions aren’t quite right. The disadvantage is that the next time the VMS will start looking for the same false positions.

Keep a close eye on the cows which take too long. With most cows just teaching one more time is enough for it to work correctly again. For others, you may want to make use of the special teat settings, adjust Milking permission, or is it just a three teat cow?

November 2011:

Shave udder hair in time.

In the fall, and especially from end lactating cows hair on the udder grows quickly.
This can make the robot to search longer to find the teats, or give more incomplete milked cows!

Has shaving the udder, or burning, a place in your work protocols?