

## Switching To Once A Day Milking

One strategy many will be using to cope with the feed shortage during the drought is once a day milking. OADM can also help maintain cow body condition in late lactation. When considering switching to OADM, there are a couple of tricks to make life easier for you. The first thing to do is to make sure the bulk tank somatic cell count (BTSCC) is under control. As a rule of thumb you can expect the count to double for 3-5 days when you change to OAD before settling back down to a level about 20% higher than twice daily milking.

If your BTSCC on twice daily milking is greater than 200,000 cells/ml, it is unlikely you will be able to go on OADM without getting grades. Herds that are running between 150-200,000 cells/ml are also at high risk of getting grades. The best idea is to identify high SCC cows from herd tests and clear up any sub-clinical infections prior to OADM. If there are cows with persistent high SCC over several herd tests, then it is probably advisable to remove these cows from the herd if you want to make it easier to use OADM on your farm.

When you reduce the number of milkings each day, you are sending a signal to the cow to produce less milk. This production drop can be off-set by increasing the amount and quality of the feed at the time of reduced milkings. An increase in feed quantity or quality, and thus energy and protein intake, sends a signal to the cow that she should produce more milk. Increasing the daily intakes is best achieved by either increasing the pasture allowance, or adding supplement such as grass silage or a crop. Once the cows have settled into the new routine their intakes can be dropped back to previous levels. I believe that it is better to switch to OADM when the cows are still producing above 1.2 kgMS/day, as they respond well to increased feed levels and seem to hold their production better on OAD.