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K Needham

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A simple and rapid test for detecting SUB-CLINICAL MASTITIS

By K. NEEDHAM, B.Sc. (Agric.), and N. INGLETON, M.D.D. (Hons.)

EXPERIENCED dairy farmers should have no trouble detecting classes of clinical mastitis with its usual manifestations of clots and blood in the milk. This is made easier if a strip cup is used as routine.

The detection of sub-clinical mastitis however is another problem. Without veterinary consultation it is extremely hard for the farmer to positively identify these cases. Sub-clinical mastitis is probably the most insidious form as it so often goes undetected and remains a constant source of re-infection in the herd.

The Californian Mastitis Test

A simple test known as the Whiteside test was developed in 1939, and was eventually modified and known as the Californian mastitis test. It relies on the fact that the white cell content of milk rises appreciably when the cow is suffering from mastitis. Certain chemicals react

Normal milk. No change in the consistency

Distinct gel formation which tends to adhere to the bottom of the dish. Ridges form when the dish is tipped