

KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE ON FARMS DURING COVID-19

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN PRACTICE DURING MILKING

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Why would we consider “social distancing” during milking?

The Federal Government, together with State Governments and the Australian Department of Health, have clearly outlined the role of social distancing in reducing the risk of COVID-19 spread in our communities. Practically, this means that in all aspects of work and daily life we attempt to maintain a 1.5m separation between individuals, regardless of the activity.

Social distancing during milking activities on a dairy farm is important. Primarily this is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between milkers but also to lessen the risk of multiple people on farm having to self-isolate should one member of the farm team become infected with COVID-19 or become compelled to self-isolate for other, non-farm related, activities.

Please note that there is no evidence that farm animals or milk can act as a vector (carrier) for COVID-19.



Image: social distancing in action during milking in a typical herringbone shed

Practical aspects of “social distancing” during milking

- Rotary sheds are easier to practice social distancing in because milkers are generally one opposite sides of the bridge; however, if two milkers are positioned at cups on or cups off, leave 3 bails between you at all times
- Herringbone sheds (Swing-over or Double-ups) can have milker cross over during normal activities - for this reason if milking in “zones” is not already part of the routine put this in place
- “Zone milking” means that, for example, two milkers operate at different end of the herringbone and work in a parallel routine so their direction of activity in the shed is always the same – this maintains separation
- Be clear on which person is responsible for going into the yard should herding be required to avoid milker cross-over
- Be clear on which person is responsible for cow segregation activities to avoid milker cross- over

Other tips to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk during milking

- Wear milking gloves from the very start of the entire milking routine through to the end – this includes vat hook up pre-milking and vat hose detachment post-milking
- At the end of each run, or every 20 cows approximately in a rotary shed, spray your milking gloves with the teat disinfectant you are using – this is an effective way to reduce any pathogen load on your gloves
- Wipe down/spray with disinfectant any jointly used pieces of milking equipment post-milking. This includes any control buttons.