

What's mastitis control worth to you?

This year every dollar counts. It's a year where every activity on the dairy farm, including mastitis control, is in focus for the value it returns.

Countdown Downunder leader Dr. Pauline Brightling says two key questions are especially relevant:

- *How much money are we likely to make from investing in mastitis control?*
- *How can we best track herd performance to ensure we get the returns from our investment?*

The Countdown Downunder team has developed an economic model of Australian farms, showing the net gains from lowering the annual average Bulk Milk Cell Count (BMCC).

'The model shows there are gains to be made right down to very low Bulk Milk Cell Counts', says Pauline.

Some results from the model are shown in the Step-Graph. It shows the net return per cow per year for reductions in the herd's annual average BMCC, in steps of 100,000 cells per mL.

The returns are calculated after taking into account benefits (such as improved milk production, additional quality premiums, and reduced costs of clinical treatment), net of the costs of preventative mastitis strategies. In this example the model has been set for split-calving herds using Murray-Goulburn's payment system.

The model shows that herds with an annual BMCC average of 250,000 cells per mL could net an additional \$47 per cow per year by implementing additional preventative strategies that drop

annual average cell counts to 150,000 cells per mL. There is more milk produced, more sold in premium, and fewer treatments required — the additional gains outstrip the additional costs by \$47 per cow.

Pauline stressed that the annual average Bulk Milk Cell Count is the average of all the BMCCs for a whole year. This gives an indication of the broad level of mastitis control for the herd over a relatively long period. If say, the annual average is 250,000 cells per mL, it is likely

that there will have been some BMCCs below 200,000 and some above 300,000 during the year.

Pauline stressed that while net returns are greatest for each 100,000 cells per mL reduction in BMCC when the average BMCC is high, there are still very worthwhile gains to be had when the BMCC is comparatively low.

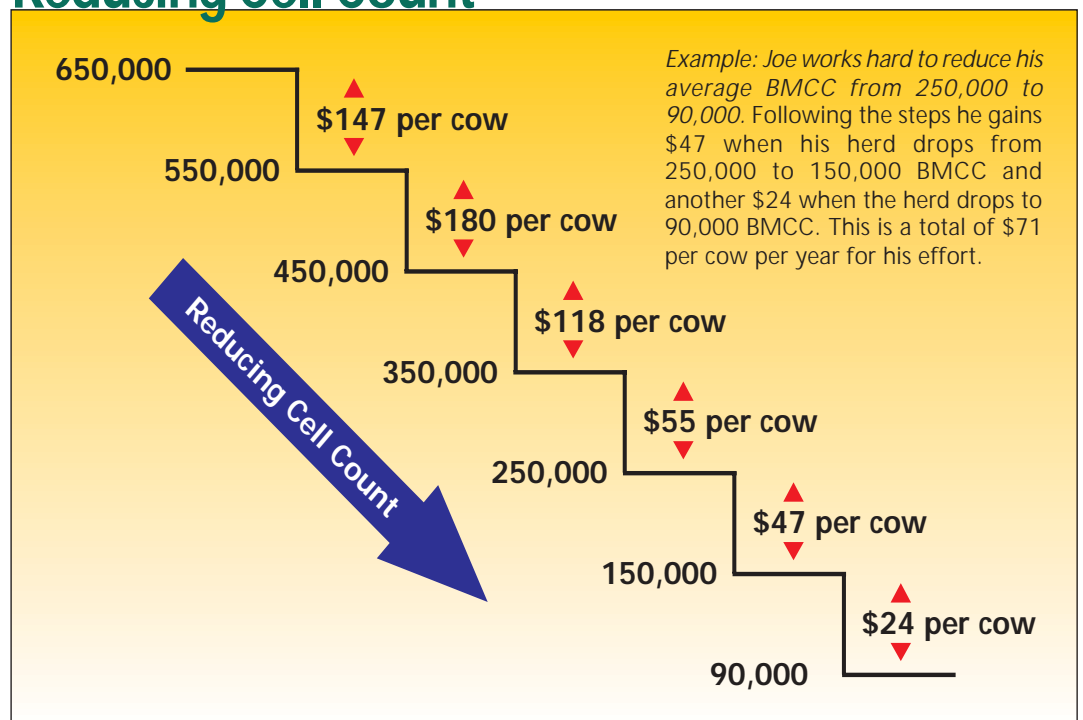
'Investing in mastitis prevention is really worthwhile — there are dollars to be made every year', she said.

'If you do a quick calculation of your BMCC for the last twelve

months, you can see how much return might be possible from implementing more effective mastitis control for your herd.'

'Economic modelling by the Countdown Downunder team shows there are real dollar returns from mastitis control, even where the BMCC is already low. The Countdown Downunder team is working with ADHIS to develop reports to help farmers monitor the effectiveness of their mastitis control measures and identify problems that might be developing.'

Reducing Cell Count



What is a drop in annual average Bulk Milk Cell Count (BMCC) worth for you? Every step you make in reducing your annual average BMCC is worth real dollars to you! Follow the steps to see what it is worth for your farm.