

# Selective dry cow therapy on the rise

### EDWIN MURPHY

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is now a much-used phrase in public and media discussion.

In simple terms, this refers to the failure of antimicrobials (antibiotics) to adequately kill off harmful bacteria, particularly in the case of human sickness. Apparently, there is expected to be more deaths from AMR than cancer by 2050.

Many of the high-end antibiotics we currently use on farms are now coming under scrutiny. It appears the continued unrestricted use of these products will cease over the

next number of years.

Selective dry cow therapy is a term most dairy farmers are familiar with. We could well be into the last couple of years of being allowed to treat every cow with an antibiotic tube at drying off. If this becomes the norm, I think it would make sense for dairy men to begin to dry off a small number of their cows with sealer only.

Obviously, technique and cleanliness are very important when sealing cows only, but if, say, 10% of the cows in the herd were sealed only and no problems occurred, it would give confidence to the farmer to increase the number of cows

treated in this way over the following few years. Of course, only consistently low cell count cows are suitable for this.

We now have a number of clients who are using dry cow tubes on only 30% to 40% of their cows. This is a situation that will be common place before long.

It is not without risk and you will get the odd case of bad mastitis. However, once people get used to it, it will become the norm and people may well wonder why so much money was spent on dry cow tubes over the years.

As cows are dried off, there is also a short window of op-

portunity to dose the cows for liver fluke. In order to comply with milk withdrawal of roughly 40 days, there is no other time of the year to do this. All licenced products are oral, so some work is involved, but it is well worth the effort.

Edwin Murphy works at Adare Veterinary Surgery, Adare, Co Limerick. Adare Veterinary Surgery is part of XLVets. XLVets is a group of progressive practices working together to achieve a better future for agriculture and veterinary in Ireland. For further information, see [www.xlvets.ie](http://www.xlvets.ie).