

SECTION III-5 HAND MILKING

5. HAND MILKING

As an alternative to milking machines, hand milking ewes is a traditional method that can be very successful in certain flocks. This milking method is generally used on smaller flocks, and is extremely cost effective, as milking equipment is not required. Even though it is more time consuming than an automated system, milkers can milk a ewe in 2 to 4 min.

5.1 HOW TO MAINTAIN HYGIENE AND PREVENT CONTAGIOUS MASTITIS

The main principles of maintaining hygiene while milking are essentially the same as maintaining good hygiene when prepping the udder for milking. Hands should be disinfected prior to milking, and ideally, gloves should be worn to decrease the chance of transferring contagious bacteria to the udder of ewes. Latex gloves may cause an allergic response in some people; blue nitrile gloves can be used instead.

Teats and udder should be as dry as possible while milking, as any residual liquid from the udder wash, teat dips or disinfectants may drip into the milk. It will also contaminate your hands during milking allowing of transmission of bacteria between ewes. Because the teat ends are not covered when hand-milking, if there is splatter on the teats from urine or manure during milk, it is important to wipe the teats before continuing.

Fig. 1. Wear gloves when milking

