



Crow River
Animal Hospital
& Dental Clinic

Friday Fun Facts – Number 30:2010

Melissa Shelton DVM – Dairy Cattle – Essential Oils for Organic Milking

Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified health care professional in your area of concern if you or your pets have a health challenge.



Ginger and Chuck – ½ hour old – still wet and laying down – August 4, 2010

It seems like a perfect time to cover natural care of Dairy Cattle. My Jersey cow Ginger, just delivered her calf 48 hours ago. Ginger is the greatest cow on earth. She has been raised as a natural family cow, her entire life. A wonderful, friendly cow, who had been shown in 4H, walks on a lead rope easily, and is more like a dog than a typical cow. She will actually come running when called! We have owned her for a little over two years now – and she is beautiful and thriving on green pasture and an all organic and natural care regimen.

As we are entering the realm of milking our family cow – important things came up. Normally, before traditional milking, a chemical wash is used to clean and disinfect the udder. Some of this residue is left on the teats, and is likely entering the milk supply in small amounts. Then - after traditional milking is completed – a “teat dip” is used to again disinfect the teats and hopefully help prevent infections in the mammary tissue, called mastitis.

The whole reason I wanted a family cow was to have wonderful, natural, non-genetically modified, organic milk for my family. Of course, we are not certified organic, but we know we do not use chemicals on our land or in our cow. I will have milk, cream, cheeses, ice cream, butter, yogurt, and more. All without chemicals, hormones, or antibiotic residues...and most importantly from a pasture fed, HAPPY and healthy cow. The last thing I want to do is to contaminate my wonderful milk by washing her “all natural” udder with chemicals that I should not ingest!

Here are the protocols that I use to make sure that my milk is as healthy and natural as possible:

It is usually a necessity to have some type of fly control for farm animals. The flies on our farm have sure been bad this year. We didn't get a chance to purchase and use “fly predators” yet – however, we know several farms that use them, and swear by them. These wasps (not the kind that are nasty to humans) are sprinkled on a manure pile, and they feed on farm flies and their larva – greatly reducing the number of flies that will hatch out. Just sprinkle a new batch onto the manure every month or so, and they “take out” the new flies.

Another thing that has been found very effective in insect repellency – is Longevity Essential Oil Blend. Giving 3-4 drops of the oil twice a day – either by mouth or in feed – seems to make flies and insects avoid the animal who is getting the oil. This was found out quite by accident, while a horse was being

treated with the oil for a separate health issue. The owner noted that the flies and insects would land on every other horse but the one being treated! It has been tried in many animals now, and is still showing great promise!! Now that Ginger is getting milked and fed twice a day – she is starting her Longevity Oil regimen.

Fly Spray – this year I found that our flies were exceptionally resistant to most of my essential oil insect repellent sprays. I needed something with more power, and with a longer duration for my cow. Since the flies were attacking her udder, I needed something safe to apply to that area, for her and for us. My solution: In a 4 ounce glass spray bottle – I would add 20-40 drops of Peppermint Essential Oil, 20-40 drops of Lemongrass Essential Oil, 20-40 drops of Purification Essential Oil Blend, and 16 drops of Oregano Essential Oil – filling it the rest of the way with V6 Enhanced Vegetable Oil Complex (affectionately just called V6). Sometimes I would vary the oils depending on what I had on hand. Rosemary, Palo Santo, and/or Idaho Tansy were also added to my spray depending on the day, and usually in varying amounts. The nice part was that it never seemed like I “did it wrong”. My daughter even commented, “Ginger smells so good!” Now, how often have you heard that on a dairy farm!!?

The most important factor in the longer lasting, potent fly deterrent – was mixing it in the oil base (V6) and adding the Oregano Oil. Oregano seemed to be the addition that really helped to repel the flies. And when you are milking a cow, you really don’t want them flicking their tail at flies, or kicking their udder when a fly is biting them!

The other wonderful aspect of Oregano Essential Oil is that it is one of the treatments of choice for mastitis. So now, not only was I repelling flies, but I may be preventing mastitis! I can’t think of a better fly spray than one with health benefits. I do also think that Ginger greatly enjoyed the Peppermint Essential Oil in her fly spray, as we had an incredibly bad hot spell just before she delivered. I can imagine the cooling benefits that she felt were heavenly!

Now that the flies were controlled, I had to actually milk the cow. Most people disinfect their milking equipment with a bleach solution. Although I am sure that it is thoroughly rinsed from the buckets, I wasn’t too happy about being exposed to bleach twice a day as I was cleaning or disinfecting the milker. My solution was to use Thieves Household Cleaner – which is highly safe, non-toxic, and VERY disinfecting. It is strong enough to kill toxic

mold, and gentle enough to bathe a dog in (especially one sprayed by a skunk!). I use this diluted and very cost effective solution to wash my milking equipment. Instead of my “milking room” and my hands smelling like bleach – we smell a wonderful “cinnamon-y” smell ☺

Next, I have to clean Ginger’s udder. I figured out several solutions to this. Currently I am using diluted Animal Scents Shampoo to wash with. I am sure that I could use the diluted Thieves Household Cleaner as well. I could also add additional essential oils to the wash if I felt that it was needed. I could sooth raw teats with a Lavender Essential Oil addition, prevent or treat Mastitis with Oregano or Melrose oils, or decrease inflammation with Copaiba oil addition. The options are endless. I wipe off the teats with a damp washcloth after washing.

Then, I milk my cow ☺

After milking, traditionally a teat dip would be applied to each teat. I make up my own teat dip. A dilute solution of Thieves Household Cleaner is wonderful. I have also used a dilute solution of the Animal Scents Shampoo. I am so happy knowing that when her baby nurses, that he is not getting harmful chemicals ingested. We are not getting harmful chemicals absorbed by our cow, into our milk supply. AND, I am likely having a much better and safer treatment of my cow – completely organically and with health BENEFITS instead of side effects.

All of the essential oils and products that I am using in our milking process – are safe for human and animal ingestion (although the soaps would not taste good, they would be safe if ingested). Also, all of the essential oils are naturally antibacterial, do not cause antibiotic resistance, and have other benefits like anti-viral properties, tissue regeneration, oxygenation, anti-inflammatory, the list goes on and on. I could also be preventing scours in my calf by having Ginger get essential oils applied to her topically!

I am so happy that I have options to care for my cow and calf naturally! Not only for the cattle, but for my family. I routinely find that these natural “remedies” are safer, more effective, and more beneficial than many of our traditional therapies. I am sure Ginger and Chuck appreciate it too!



Chuck – ½ hour old

Please remember – that I only recommend the use of Young Living Essential Oils for your human family and your animal family. With this recommendation, I am certain that you will have safe and powerful oils, with consistent results. I never have to guess at the quality of the oil that you have... If they are Young Living Oils, I know that they are medical grade, and I don't even have to question it.

Feel free to contact our office or visit our website for more information on how to order Young Living Essential oils, or for consultations on how to use essential oils for the health of your entire family – two legged and four legged (and on our farm, sometimes three legged!).

“Mother Nature gave us the gift of healing. Providing our bodies with the nutrients, substances, and care required to heal, lies in our own actions.”

Melissa Shelton DVM
Crow River Animal Hospital & Dental Clinic
www.CrowRiverAnimalHospital.com
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