

# Winter Ready Tips



With temperatures dropping below freezing and a cold week in store, it is important to take steps now to make sure your farm stays safe and operational over the course of the lower temperatures.

Lakeland Dairies Member Relations has some advice for suppliers.

## Milking machines

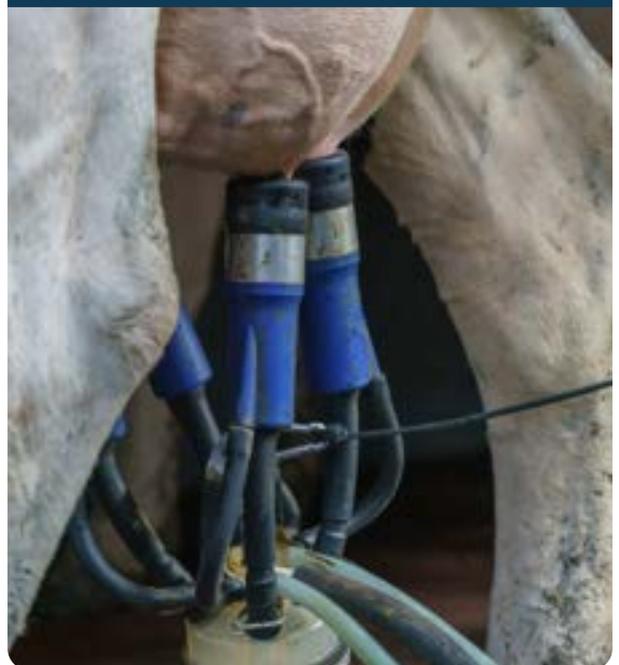
For those at all year around milking or liquid or winter milk, taking steps to keeping your parlour running is important. To reduce the risk of ice forming in milking machines:

- ▶ Make sure that all doors into the parlour are kept closed.
- ▶ Install a thermostatically controlled heater in the plant room which should cut in when the temperature falls to 1°C.
- ▶ Keep items such as the power washer in the plant room to prevent the pump from freezing.
- ▶ Let the machine run a little bit longer to ensure that all excess water is removed from the plant after the final rinse.
- ▶ Open the machine at the low points, particularly at the filter sock - some machines may also have a drain at the base of the receiver jar.
- ▶ Remove the jettors from the claw pieces and let them hang down.
- ▶ Circulate a saline/ salt solution through the milking machine, having first made sure that all the detergent has been rinsed out of the plant.
- ▶ This solution is made by mixing half a kg of salt in five gallons (22 litres) of water. Salt will drop the freezing point of water. Rinse before milking to remove salt traces. If the rinse is inclined to freeze, start milking without rinsing and let the first few gallons go to waste or feed to calves.
- ▶ Diaphragm milk pumps can also cause problems. Open the locking nuts to allow any excess water to escape or alternatively place an infra-red light over it.

## Milk collection

As well as having your parlour running over the cold snap, it's also important to ensure that your haulier can collect milk safely.

- ▶ Clear and grit the area outside the dairy door to help reduce the risk of slippage.
- ▶ Make sure that access to the dairy from the road is clear, gritted and ice-free.





## Maintaining farm machinery

You can take a number of steps to keep machinery in good condition.

### Slurry scrapers

If snow does fall at weekend, clear it from outdoor scrapers at the entrance to the tank. Keep the ratchet mechanism and tracks free of frozen slurry.

### Tractors

Keep tractors in the shed when not in use. Have adequate anti-freeze in the cooling system. It can become diluted if being topped up during the year. Traces of water in fuel lines can freeze and block flow. Have batteries fully charged to cope with the extra demands of starting in freezing conditions.

### Personal safety in the winter

There is an increased risk of injury during severe weather conditions. Most injuries result from slips and falls causing fractures and head injuries:

- ▶ Clear tracks around the farmyard, treat with de-icing salt and keep to these safe walkways.
- ▶ Grit sloped yards and roadways to facilitate traffic.
- ▶ Keep away from hazardous areas and rough terrain.
- ▶ Bring a mobile phone when going out herding or on other journeys.



Please contact Lakeland Dairies Member Relations on **0818 47 47 20** or **028 3026 2311** if you have any questions about the cold snap and getting your farm ready.

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