

## Herd Health

### How to Launder Udder Cloths

Many dairy managers use cloth towels rather than single service paper towels for premilking udder preparation. Questions often arise over how to launder the cloths. How should they be disinfected? Should bleach be added to the towel wash water? Should hot water be used? Should the towels be dried? Should all three of these procedures be included in the laundering process?

Washington State University researchers conducted a study to determine effectiveness of adding bleach, hot water, and forced hot air drying to the laundering process of cloth towels. Several different combinations of the three practices were tested. A commercial detergent was used for each treatment.

Results indicate that only one practice hot water, bleach or hot air drying needs to be incorporated into the udder cloth laundering method. The method that a manager chooses to use will most probably be dictated by economics. Hot water may be costly and tax the dairy's hot water supply. Bleach adds cost to the procedure and may cause premature towel wear. And, there is a cost associated with the purchase and use of a dryer. The results clearly indicated that all three practices need not be used for laundering. Perhaps the incorporation of two practices would add a margin of safety to ensure that udder cloths were sufficiently disinfected.

*Source: Agribusiness Dairyman, December 1996, pg. 16*