Mastitis. It is the most common infectious disease of dairy cattle. Cost to a farmer due to lost milk production alone is staggering. Not to mention money spent on treatment and discarded treated milk. Farmers rightly do everything they can to prevent new cases of mastitis. But a complete eradication of all mastitis is just not possible. A single treatment protocol for all mastitis, or a treatment decision based solely on the visible character of abnormal milk, often results in discouraging treatment success rates.

If we could know more about the cause of an individual cow’s mastitis, we could achieve higher treatment success rates; avoid wasteful, expensive, ineffective treatments; discard less milk; and target our mastitis prevention strategies to greater effect.

With this in mind we are pleased to announce that

**Homestead Large Animal has started a milk lab!**

Given a cleanly-taken milk sample, we now have the ability to determine the cause of mastitis right here in the office, and have ***actionable results within just one day***!

How can you best use this new service?

1. Familiarize yourself with the proper way to take a clean milk sample, detailed instructions are included. Pick up sample vials, or ask for some at your next herd check.
2. Identify all the cows in your herd with abnormal milk – from tiny flakes to water and cheese
3. Collect a clean sample, labeling the vial clearly with the cow ID and which quarter was sampled.
4. Call the office and we will have the nearest vet come by to pick up your sample(s).
5. Within one day, you will receive preliminary results by phone along with an individualized treatment recommendation.

If you would rather have our professional staff collect the milk sample(s), we are happy to accommodate you. It is important to collect a sample before beginning treatment with antibiotics. Feel free to drop off your sample(s) at the office if you are nearby. If you detect mastitis on a Saturday or Sunday then consider collecting a sample and freezing it so that we can pick it up on Monday and begin a culture.

You may be interested to know that we have hired a veterinary technician, Dana Ursu, who will be helping to keep our milk lab running, and she will also be available to perform other services on your farm during routine herd check. Dehorning, Johnes sample collection, calf health monitoring, and fresh cow nutritional status monitoring, are some of the services she is able to perform.