

## Shining a Light on Better Udder Prep

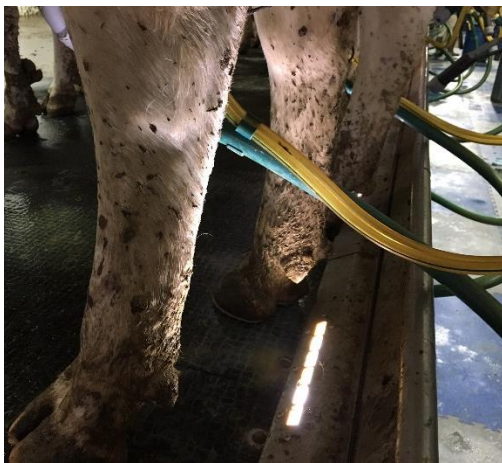
By Lindsay Ferlito

Harvesting quality milk is dependent on what happens all around the farm, including in the pen and in the parlor. Stalls and alleyways must be kept clean, as this will help keep cows clean and reduce the time it takes in the parlor to prep cows. Once in the parlor, the focus should be on cleaning the teats and getting milk out of cows as cleanly and efficiently as possible. Below are some examples of how producers are taking steps to improve udder prep in the parlor.

### The Latest in Parlor Technology

Every day it seems like there is a new piece of technology available to dairies to streamline tasks, provide more data, or improve cow health or comfort, and the milk parlor is no exception. Here is one example of a simple, yet smart idea that was implemented in a local parlor at North Ridge Dairy, owned in addition to Locust Hill Farm by the Alford family. They have installed parlor deck lights to illuminate the udder of each cow as she stands in the parlor. These lights are LED and low voltage, so they don't require a lot of energy to run them during milking. Additionally, the lights are housed in a waterproof case to ensure they survive life in the parlor. The lights can be installed in almost any new or existing parlor.

The parlor lights are designed to improve visibility of the teats and udder to ultimately improve udder prep and cleanliness during and after milking. Owner Tim Alford said his workers love the lights. In regards to how the lights have helped with improving udder prep, Alford said, "you can see better. If you can see better, you can do a better job".



### Milking Protocols

The National F.A.R.M. Program requires dairies with non-family hired workers to have written SOPs for all tasks on the dairy, including milking. These protocols should be offered in the language spoken by the workers. Additionally, it's always a good idea to have a second set of eyes to review your parlor and udder prep SOPs, and have somebody regularly evaluate the parlor to see if these SOPs are being followed. This could mean asking a consultant that works with your dairy, going through a parlor evaluation offered through Quality Milk Production Services, or asking your local extension specialist.