



Removing “Extra” Teats

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

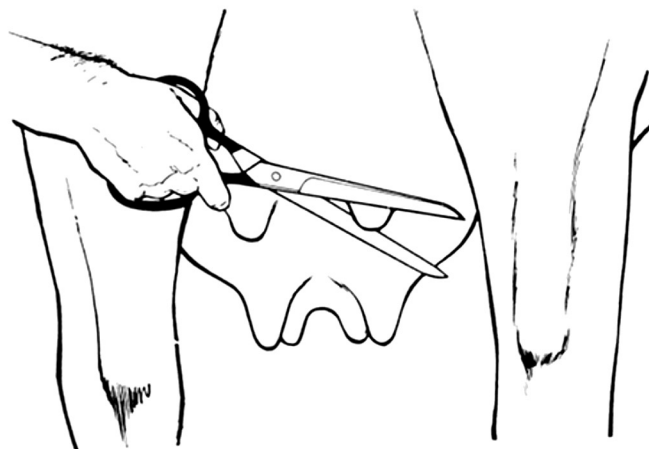
Charles Cox

State 4-H Program Leader and Program Specialist

A desirably shaped udder with four, well-spaced teats does a great deal for the general appearance of a dairy cow. It may also improve its value as a milk cow in the dairy herd. Heifers are occasionally born with one or more extra teats. These extra teats can be unsightly, may pose a problem as a site for an udder infection, and may interfere with the function of the milking machine.

Extra teats should be removed as soon as they can be positively identified. It is best to remove extra teats when a heifer calf is two to six weeks old. The young calf does not have a great deal of blood circulation in the skin area around the rudimentary teats; therefore, very little bleeding can be expected.

1. These extra teats are usually located to the rear of the four normal teats—but not always.
2. Extra teats should be removed while the animal is young and before it leaves the calf barn or hutch.
3. Be absolutely sure to remove only extra teats. Removal of a normal teat by mistake would be harmful to the animal.
4. Remove extra teats the following way:
 - a. Identify extra teats to be removed. If in doubt, get a dairy producer or veterinarian to look at them before removing.
 - b. Wash udder with soap and warm water. This removes the foreign matter from the area and reduces the chance of infection.
 - c. Wash the udder with disinfectant solution.



Rear view of a heifer's udder enlarged for clarity.

- d. Stretch “extra” teat and hold firmly with one hand.
 - e. Use sharp, disinfected scissors.
 - f. Paint cuts with tincture of iodine.
 - g. In fly season, observe animals following the operation. Paint wounds with pine oil to repel the flies.
 - h. Disinfectant powder may be effective to control the bleeding.
5. Some dairy producers ask a veterinarian to remove extra teats as a routine practice when vaccinating heifers.

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The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.

- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

The author wishes to recognize Jack D. Stout and Curtis W. Richardson, Extension dairy specialists, for authoring previous versions of this 4-H fact sheet.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Edwin L. Miller, Interim Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Dean of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 20 cents per copy. 1204.