“Hi! This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the UVM research team that visited your farm this past spring for a study on bedding material and milk quality, where we spent some time doing a survey together and we collected samples of bulk tank milk and bedding material. Thank you so much for your participation in this part of the study! I hope this email finds your farm well, with the cows finally on pasture and enjoying the grass.

This coming fall and winter, we’re moving on to the second phase of our milk quality and bedding study, and would like you to consider participating again. This second phase of the study will require a greater time commitment, but we will be compensating participating farms for their time and effort with a stipend of $1000 for participation in the full duration of the study.”

The rest I don’t have scripted until we figure out the details. These are details I pulled from the grant, the best I could:

* For this study, we will be visiting farms once a month, for 5 months in a row, for the duration of a (morning?) milking
* Record keeping sheet?
  + Farms to collect individual quarter milk samples from all cases of clinical mastitis that occur during the study and keep them in the freezer until we can pick them up every month
* Samples collected monthly:
  + Composite sample of bedded pack material or used shavings from tiestall bedding (approximate volume?)
  + 35 cows from your herd will be randomly selected (with some qualifying criteria) for us to collect individual quarter samples from during milking
  + Teat end swabs, where a sterile cotton swab will be wiped across the end of the teat before the teat is prepared for milk sampling
  + Bulk tank milk (approximate volume)
* Information they can gain from the study
  + Bedding cultures, bulk tank cultures, identification of the causes of mastitis cases based on bacterial cultures (won’t be immediately after sample collection for use in treatment decisions, but is still useful to know what kind of pathogens are most common on the farm, or identify any cows with chronic contagious/Staph aureus mastitis)

Hi Ethan,

Hope the fall is finding all of you at the farm well- I'm sure it's a busy time! This is Caitlin from the UVM research team that visited your farm this past spring for a study on bedding material and milk quality, where we spent some time doing a survey together and we collected samples of bulk tank milk and bedding material. Thank you so much for your participation in this part of the study!

I talked with your dad a few weeks ago about our upcoming study. This coming fall and winter, we’re moving on to the second phase of our milk quality and bedding study, and would like you to consider participating again. This second phase of the study will require a greater time commitment, but we will be compensating participating farms for their time and effort with a stipend of $1000 for participation in the full duration of the study. For this study, we will be visiting farms once a month, for 5 months in a row, for the duration of a milking. We again will be collecting a single composite sample of bedded pack material, and a 250 mL sterile dipper with bulk tank milk at each visit. Additionally, 35 cows would be randomly selected (with some qualifying criteria) for us to collect individual quarter samples from during milking.

In addition to the financial compensation, bedding cultures, bulk tank cultures, and identification of the causes of mastitis cases based on bacterial cultures will be determined and shared with you as well. Mastitis cases won’t be immediately be diagnosed after sample collection for use in treatment decisions, but is still useful to know what kind of pathogens are most common on the farm, or identify any cows with chronic contagious/Staph aureus mastitis.

We hope to start sampling once cows are no longer on pasture and are in their winter housing, so thinking end of November (weather and farm dependent, of course!). We appreciate you considering participating in our study! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you.

Hi! This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the UVM research team that visited your farm this past spring for a study on bedding material and milk quality, where we spent some time doing a survey together and we collected samples of bulk tank milk and bedding material. Thank you so much for your participation in this part of the study! This coming fall and winter, we’re moving on to the second phase of our milk quality and bedding study, and would like you to consider participating again. This second phase of the study will require a greater time commitment, but we will be compensating participating farms for their time and effort.

* For this study, we will be visiting farms once a month, for 5 months in a row, for the duration of a (morning?) milking
* Record keeping sheet?
  + Farms to collect individual quarter milk samples from all cases of clinical mastitis that occur during the study and keep them in the freezer until we can pick them up every month
* Samples collected monthly:
  + Composite sample of bedded pack material or used shavings from tiestall bedding (approximate volume?)
  + 35 cows from your herd will be randomly selected (with some qualifying criteria) for us to collect individual quarter samples from during milking. We will be collecting the milk sample directly from the gland cistern by inserting a very small diameter, flexible, soft, sterile plastic catheter through the teat end. This is a technique we have previously used and does not appear to cause the cow any discomfort. Sampling each cow before milking will be quick, and researchers are trained to complete this task in a manner that is sterile, efficient, and will not impact farm activities
  + Teat end swabs, where a sterile cotton swab will be wiped across the end of the teat before the teat is prepared for milk sampling
  + Bulk tank milk (approximate volume)
* Stipend
* Information they can get from the study
  + Bedding cultures, bulk tank cultures, identification of the causes of mastitis cases based on bacterial cultures (won’t be immediately after sample collection for use in treatment decisions, but is still useful to know what kind of pathogens are most common on the farm, or identify any cows with chronic contagious/Staph aureus mastitis)

Hi! This is Caitlin Jeffrey from the UVM research team that visited your farm this past spring for a study on bedding material and milk quality, where we spent some time doing a survey together and collected samples of bulk tank milk and bedding material. Thank you so much for your participation in this part of the study!

I hope this email finds your farm well, with the cows finally on pasture and enjoying the grass. I wanted to reach out about three things:

Firstly, we left some materials at the farm, hoping you might be able to collect some quarter milk samples from cows that were high cell count, clinical mastitis cases, or cows with chronic cases of mastitis. I’m beginning to make plans to collect these samples, and wondering if you have been able to collect any?

Secondly, I wanted to make sure that you received a check for your participation in the study- we waited to submit all the payments at once (after we were done our farm visits at the end of May) to make the process smoother, so thank you for your patience.

Lastly, I’m starting to receive information on bedding cultures and bulk tank cultures from our study farms. We submitted them a few weeks ago (again, waiting to do all at once), and the lab in Minnesota has been processing them as they can fit them in. If it works for you, we’ll be putting this information and can send it along through email.

Thanks, and look forward to hearing from you.

Caitlin Jeffrey