

A close-up photograph of several brown cows looking over a wire fence. The cows are the main focus of the background image, with their heads and eyes visible. The text 'DIY Dairy Animal Recipes' is overlaid on the image in a white, chalk-like font, enclosed in a white rectangular frame.

DIY
Dairy Animal
Recipes

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and it makes me absolutely giddy. Who cares about buying a brand new car? Having a milk cow (or goat) is the new status symbol — at least in my humble homestead opinion.



There is nothing more rewarding than returning to the house after morning chores carrying a heavy bucket filled to the brim with foamy, raw milk. Factor in all of the beautiful things you can do with that milk, and you'll quickly understand why home dairying just might be my most favorite part of homesteading.

Here's a collection of my favorite DIY recipes you can use to care for your dairy animals. These will save you a trip to the feed store, and allow you to skip some of the chemicals and junk in the conventional options.



Many commercially available udder salves are made from petroleum products. I don't know about you, but it seems a little silly to put a highly-processed, petroleum-based oil on my animals' udders when there are so many natural and nourishing food-grade oils available.

This simple salve can be used on your goats, cattle, and sheep. It's safe enough to eat (*although it won't taste very good*), and easy to mix up.

This recipe also makes a soothing treatment for your own hands, so don't be afraid to rub the leftovers into your fingers when you are done applying it to the udder.

- + 1/2 ounce beeswax
- + 1 ounce shea butter OR cocoa butter
- + 1 ounce coconut oil
- + 3 ounces olive oil



- + 10 drops frankincense essential oil
- + 10 drops lavender essential oil

(Other essential oil combinations can be found below)

1. In a double boiler, melt the beeswax. *(I don't have an official double-boiler, so instead I place the beeswax in a Pyrex measuring cup (or some other stovetop-safe container), and place the cup in a large saucepan filled half-way with boiling water.)*
2. After the beeswax has melted, add in the shea butter and coconut oil. Once everything has liquefied, remove it from the heat.
3. Gently stir in the olive oil and essential oils.
4. Pour the mixture into a small glass container *(select a container with a wide mouth to allow for easy access)* and store the salve at room temperature.
5. Massage the salve into the udder as often as needed. I like to apply it right after I finish milking.

OTHER ESSENTIAL OIL OPTIONS:

- Lavender *(soothing & healing)*
- Clove *(numbing)*
- Melaleuca *(cleansing)*
- Peppermint *(mastitis relief)*
- Frankincense *(soothing and healing)*



NOTES:

- ▶ Once this salve becomes cold, it is nearly impossible to scoop it out of the jar. So I wouldn't recommend leaving it out in the barn during the winter months.
- ▶ I like to keep it in my mudroom and then slip it into my pocket as I head outside with my milk bucket.
- ▶ This recipe lends itself well to tweaking. If you prefer it firmer, add more beeswax. If you prefer a softer salve, add more olive oil. And don't worry too much about precise measurements — it's very forgiving.



If you walk through the aisles of your local farm supply store, you'll probably find several commercial udder wash options. Many home dairy enthusiasts also use bleach or iodine to wash udders before milking, but I've never personally found a need to use any harsh cleansers on my animals.

For several years now, I've simply cleaned my goats and cows with a damp hand towel before I start milking, and I've never had a single issue. However, if you would like to try something a little more potent than plain water, this recipe should do the trick.

Wipes are handy since they are always ready to go, and you don't have to go searching for extra towels. However, make sure that you only use a wipe once. After it has touched the udder, either wash it or toss it. Don't stick it back into your container, as it will contaminate the clean wipes.



- + 1 quart water
- + 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- + 10 drops melaleuca (*tea tree*) essential oil
- + 10 drops thyme essential oil

1. Mix all of the ingredients together and place the mixture into a spray bottle.
2. Spray down the udder, and then wipe it off with a towel. Or make homemade udder wipes using this udder wash solution and the instructions for the barn wipes above.



After the milking process is complete, it's common practice among many dairy folk to dip their animal's teats in some sort of antibacterial solution to help seal the teat from any infection-causing bacteria that might be lurking.

Personally, I've never really dipped my goats or cows, and I've never had a problem with omitting this step of the process. I suspect that the importance of teat dipping comes into play more in commercial dairy situations, where dozens of cows are being milked via machine. However, if you have struggled with mastitis or infection on your homestead, then this is something you might need to consider.

There are many different chemical teat dips on the market, as well as numerous recipes floating around the Internet for do-it-yourself dips. Unfortunately, many of these recipes contain things like bleach or other harsh ingredients.



If you do decide to start dipping your dairy animals, you can avoid all of those problem ingredients by mixing up this recipe instead.

- + 1 quart water
- + 10 drops grapefruit seed extract
- + 2 drops lavender essential oil
- + 2 drops melaleuca essential oil

1. Combine all of the ingredients.
2. Either spray this solution on the teats after you are finished milking, or pour a small amount into a cup and dip each teat.

NOTES:

- ▶ Why grapefruit seed extract? It is a fairly easy-to-find ingredient with proven antibacterial properties.
- ▶ Remember to discard the solution after you are done dipping. Do not pour it back into the main jar.



Milk is full of calcium, and after a while, that calcium can cause a build-up on equipment that can be difficult to remove.

Commercial dairies use a variety of chemical washes to clean their equipment, but I haven't found those to be necessary in my homestead-dairy experience.

After you finish straining your milk each day, it's important to wash your equipment (*buckets, funnels, strainers, etc.*) with cool water to prevent build-up from forming.

Even though we have incredibly hard well-water, I have little trouble with milkstone, since I make sure to always rinse my equipment immediately with cool water after milking — even if I don't put it through a cycle in my dishwasher until later.



You shouldn't need to use an acid wash every day, but it's not a bad idea to use it on your equipment on a weekly or monthly basis, just to keep everything nice and sparkly.

- + 1 gallon cool water
- + 2 cups white distilled vinegar

1. Mix the vinegar and water and soak your equipment in the solution for several hours to remove scale or hard water deposits.
2. Complete the process by washing everything with hot, soapy water, or running it through your dishwasher. *(I personally prefer to use my dishwasher, as it gets hot enough to sterilize everything.)*

NOTES:

- ▶ The length of soaking time depends on the degree of buildup.
- ▶ Make sure to completely rinse the vinegar from the equipment, otherwise, it will cause your milk to curdle, and that would be sad.



I stood in the barn one summer morning and paused as I watched the cloud of fly spray I had just spritzed all over my cow settle into my milk bucket. In that bucket was the milk I was planning to give to my children. It occurred to me that I didn't really want them drinking permethrin insecticide in their glass of milk that day, and so that was the last time I ever used commercial fly spray on my milk cow. I've been using a version of the following recipe ever since with fabulous results.

- + 4 cups quart raw apple cider vinegar
- + 20 drops rosemary essential oil
- + 20 drops basil essential oil
- + 20 drops peppermint essential oil
- + 2 tablespoons liquid oil (olive oil, canola oil, or mineral oil will work)
- + 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap



1. Mix together in a spray bottle.
2. Apply to the animals frequently (*give it a good shake before applying*).
And be careful, it smells strong. Whew!

I'm Jill Winger— a former Idaho girl who came to Wyoming to ride horses, and hasn't looked back since. I didn't grow up on a ranch, or farm, or even on acreage, but I've always had a deep-rooted obsession for the rural way of life. My handy hubby, Christian, and I purchased our 67-acre homestead in 2008, which we currently share with horses, dogs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, goats, chickens, ducks, and three wild prairie children.

Not too long after starting my own homesteading journey, I discovered I wasn't the only one dreaming about compost piles and homemade bread.

I started The Prairie Homestead with the goal of offering community, solidarity, and inspiration for other folks who are on this same path of returning to our roots in this fast-paced modern world. I just might be the [most imperfect homesteader](#) you'll ever find and I most certainly don't claim to have this whole thing figured out. But, I promise to share this crazy journey of mine as it happens-- both the good and the bad.





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