



Every dairy has a milking button and a light tower but both items could be in any location. The button is usually placed next to something else they turn on for milking and the light tower where it is visible to staff. The button and tower play very important roles in the alert management process.

First the Button:

- It should be pressed before any other machinery is started
- It kind of doesn't matter if it is 10 minutes prior or 30 minutes prior
- It should be turned off when the last of the milking cows have gone through
- Most alerts are activated and cancelled with this button

The button acts to tell you that at least staff are present and how long the milking operation took. This alone is important management information but it also starts timers, such as the cool down rate for the vat. The concept of "milking time", however, does not start until the Milk Line Pressure sees milk flowing into the vat. During milking time, all sorts of monitors are in progress.

Secondly, the light tower:

- Depending on the dairy, it can be three or five lights and with a buzzer.
- Each light (or combination) can represent a different fault:
 - Low milk line pressure
 - High milk temp going in to the vat
 - Low vacuum at the clusters
 - Blocked augers or over-feeding
 - Vat compressor not started
 - Not enough hot water
 - Low water supply or failed pump
 - Vat valve not opened
- There is a buzzer that can be activated to alert local staff to an issue that must be urgently addressed. Normally the buzzer is reserved for things that must be addressed immediately.

- A laminated 'cheat sheet' is normally supplied to hang beneath the light tower for reference. The meaning will be different at each dairy.

So in summary, the milking button is the critical human interface to setting up and cancelling visual and audible alarms. All such events are recorded but clearly there is an important benefit to onsite staff.