

Service teat spray units and review teat disinfectant

26.1 Clean and check teat spraying equipment.

Technote 7 discusses teat spray units.

Routine checks for the maintenance of teat spraying equipment are very basic and include:

- inspecting tubes for any cracks or leaks. Stains on the floor underneath the spray line may alert users to a problem;
- examining each individual spray unit for dirt, damage or corrosion; and
- ensuring that the container of stock solution of teat disinfectant does not contain sediment and has an airtight seal.

In general, damage is easily corrected by replacing the offending component.

Technote 7 discusses teat disinfectants.

Technote 9.1 describes how to assess teat skin condition.

Technote 7.5 discusses the use of emollients in the teat dip.

Farm Guideline 7.7 describes how to check the operator technique.

Publications from the National Mastitis Council can be previewed at www.nmconline.org

26.2 Review teat disinfectant and method of application to be used.

It is important to encourage farmers to regularly review their satisfaction with the teat disinfectant they are using and discourage them from making a snap decision at the time of purchase of new stock. The types of factors to consider are:

- Skin reactions on the hands of milking staff. The type of disinfectant may need to be changed if it has caused dermatitis on hands of any staff in the milking shed. Products should be reviewed if there are any changes in staff. People who wear gloves will have less skin exposure to disinfectants.
- Reaction of teat skin to disinfectants. Teats should be regularly checked to ensure the skin is supple and in good condition. Corrective changes may involve altering the concentration of emollient or changing the product. It is very important to monitor changes whenever a new product is used.
- The effectiveness of the teat disinfectant. Published information on product efficacy is available from the product manufacturer. In the United States, Hogan et al (1990) have described the protocols used to evaluate teat disinfectants and the National Mastitis Council (1997) has reviewed literature published since 1980.
- The price of the disinfectant. There is a lot of variation in the price of different products and it may be helpful to calculate the cost per application for each cow to compare their cost-effectiveness (see the example below). When diluting stock solutions of iodophor products, remember that the final solution should contain at least 0.5% iodine.
- The method of application. If there is any problem with coverage of the teat, check the equipment and the operator technique. Consider changing the method of application (e.g. from teat dipping to teat spraying) if the problem continues.

Key papers

Hogan JS, Galton DM, Harmon RJ et al. Protocols for evaluating postmilking teat dips. *J Dairy Sci* 1990;73:2580-2585.

National Mastitis Council. Summary of peer-reviewed publications on efficacy of premilking and postmilking teat disinfectants published since 1980. In: Proceedings of the 36th National Mastitis Council Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1997:276-287.