

Teat dipping

by Les Vermeulen

Teat dipping is one of the single most important management practices to combat and control mastitis. It reduces new infections by up to 80%. However, for this to happen certain rules have to be followed. The teat dips must be evaluated by the following criteria:

- **Killing ability** – The dip must be a broad-spectrum sanitiser. This means that it can kill up to 99,99% of the germs that cause mastitis within 30 seconds
- **Cleaning ability** – The dip must remove milk film left behind after milking. This milk film is a growing place for bacteria
- **Skin condition ability** – The dip must contain glycerine, lanolin or any other skin conditioners. This works like a lotion to keep teats supple and free from cracks and sores that is a breeding ground for the pathogens that cause mastitis.



Dipping before milking

Before you start dipping, carefully read the instructions on the dip. You must follow these instructions to prevent teat dip residue from entering the milk. When you dip, you must:

- Pre-clean teats if necessary
- Apply teat dip, allow 30 second contact time after teat dip has been applied before stripping (testing for mastitis)
- Dry teats with a single disposable paper towel per cow
- Attach milking unit.

After milking teat dip

Disinfecting teats with a good teat dip right after the milking unit is removed, kills most of the pathogens on the teats that cause udder infections and mastitis. The teat dip must be applied immediately after the milk unit is removed from the cow. The longer you wait, the more the chances are for the pathogens to enter the teat canal.

Teat dips can be applied by a special teat dip cup, or a teat spraying system. Both methods are acceptable if the entire teat is covered with dip. A simple test to see if the whole teat is covered with the teat dip is to wrap a sheet of paper around the teat after spraying. It must be wet all around if the teat is properly dipped.

When using a teat dip cup, it must be the non-return type. It must be washed out after each milking and any dip left over in the cup must be thrown away. The teat spraying system must be checked regularly to make sure all nozzles are still working.

Remember, teat dipping is still the best way to prevent mastitis. **UM**