

Post-milking teat disinfection

Product choice and operator technique

Michelle McGrath, Assistant CellCheck Programme Manager

Prevention and control of mastitis is based on multiple principles that have been known for a long time. There is no silver bullet in mastitis control as mastitis is a complex, multifactorial disease. Pathogens, cows, and farmers all play a role in mastitis control. Routine post-milking teat disinfection is an integral part of every mastitis control programmes and its importance is often overlooked. It has been shown that effective post-milking teat disinfection lowers new infection rates by 50% or more but it only works if it is done thoroughly and throughout the entire lactation.

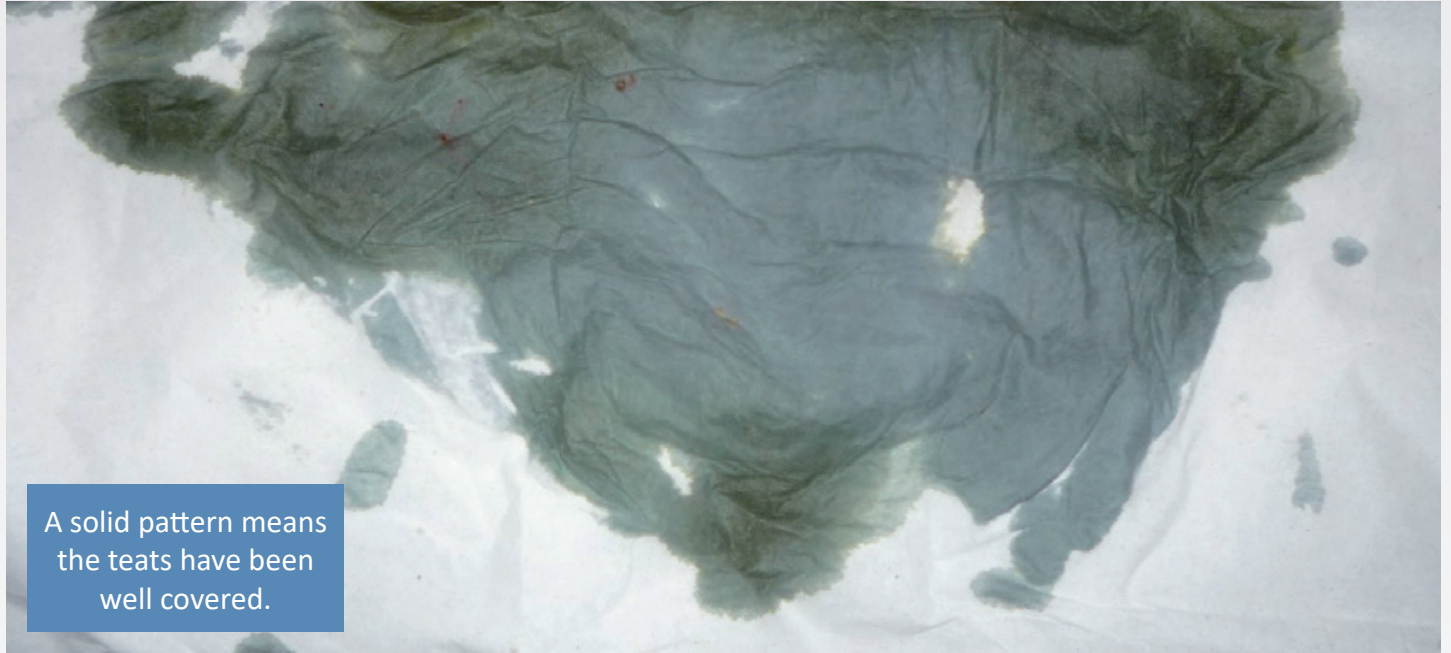
Milk from infected quarters contains bacteria that may contaminate the skin of many other teats during milking. Certain bacteria (*Staph aureus* and *Strep agalactiae*) in milk from an infected cow may be found on the liners and transferred to the teat skin of the next 5 to 6 cows that are milked with that unit. Once on the teat skin, they multiply (especially at sites of teat lesions) and so increase the risk of infection of the quarter via the teat canal. If the whole teat is disinfected after milking it reduces the bacterial load, and thus the risk of infection. Post-milking teat disinfection also helps keep teat skin healthy and heal teat lesions, and these actions have an important contribution to mastitis control.

When choosing a disinfectant beware of unregistered products. Using unregistered products risk applying ineffective treatments, having chemical residues in milk or meat, and causing harm to the environment, human health, or animal health. If the product is registered it will have either a PCS or a HPRA (previously IMB) number on the drum label. Teat disinfectants making a medicinal claim (e.g. aid in the prevention of mastitis) are subject to registration and regulation by the Health Products Regulatory Authority ([click here](#)). If no medicinal claim is made, teat disinfectants are classed as biocides, and these are subject to registration and regulation by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine ([click here](#)). A list of teat disinfectant products on the market can also be viewed on the Teagasc website ([click here](#)).

Effective application of teat disinfection is essential as the benefits of teat disinfection are lost if the teat disinfectant does not cover all the teat skin. Spraying is preferred as it is considered quicker and easier-however, it is important that shortcuts are not taken, for it to be as effective as teat dipping.

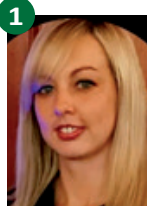
It is essential that the entire teat (everywhere the liner has touched) is disinfected and not just the teat end. Ready to use (RTU) products are recommended as best practice, particularly for farms experiencing difficulties sourcing water of adequate quality or mixing solutions consistently.

To cover the teats correctly, at least 15ml of teat disinfectant per cow/per milking is needed. Knowing this allows you to do a quick calculation for your herd to see if enough product is being used. However, adequate volume alone does not ensure teats are being covered correctly. To assess if all sides of the teat are being covered, wrap a piece of paper towel around the barrel of the teat, then carefully remove and examine the wet or stained area. If using a teat dip cup keep the cup clean and do not allow organic material to accumulate in the cup. Clean out immediately if dirt or manure drops into the cup and wash out the dip cup at least once a day.



CELLCHECK REGIONAL COORDINATORS

A Resource and Point of Contact for *CellCheck* Activities in your Area



1
Majella Mc Cafferty
086 0597949
majella.mccafferty@aurivo.ie
Mayo/Sligo/Donegal
Aurivo



2
John Murphy
066 7163200
john.murphy@kerry.ie
Kerry/Clare
Kerry Agribusiness



3
Aoife Feeney
afeeney@carbery.com
087 3484901.
West Cork
Carbery Group



4
Tom Downes
087 2564669
downest@lakeland.ie
Longford/Monaghan
Lakeland Dairies



5
Brendan Dillon
087 2626851
BrDillon@glanbia.ie
Cork/Waterford/
Wexford/Wicklow
Glanbia



6
Tom Starr
087 6697010
tstarr@arrabawn.ie
Tipperary/Limerick
National Co-op



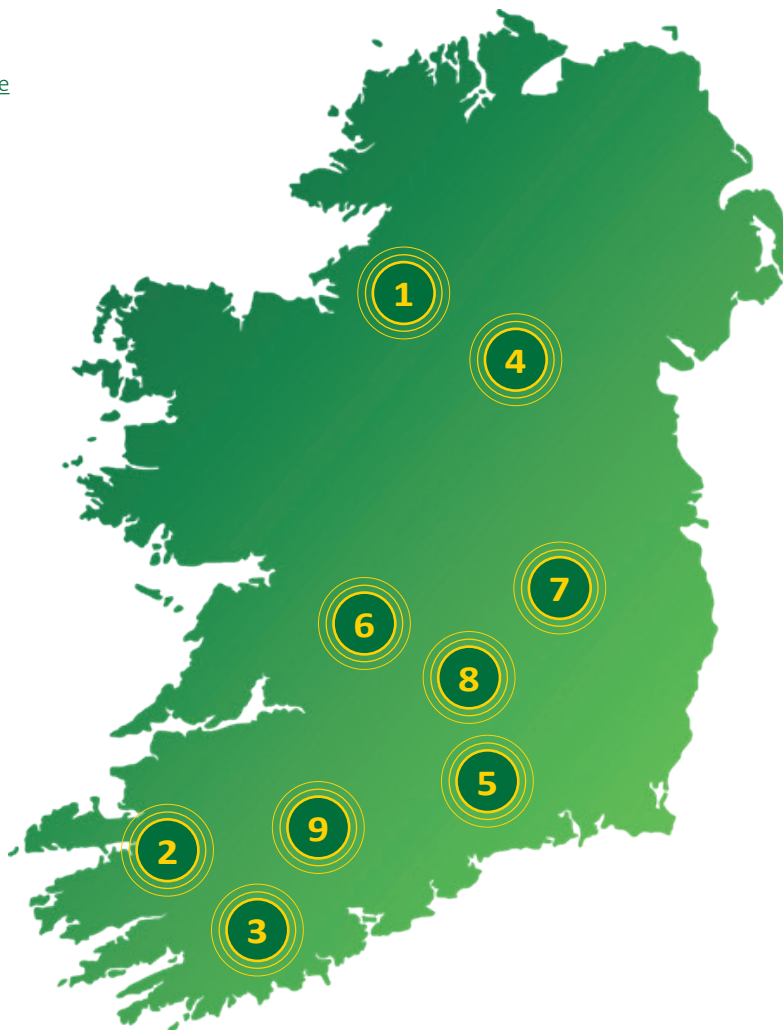
7
John Fitzpatrick
086 0426567
fitzpatrickj@glanbia.ie
Kilkenny/Laois/Carlow/
Kildare/Dublin
Glanbia



8
Andrew O'Neill
086 1836505
aoneill@tipperary-coop.ie
Tipperary
Tipperary Co-Op



9
Denis Guiry
086 8098639
dguiry@dairygold.ie
Cork/Tipperary/Limerick
Dairygold



NATIONAL MASTITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME

Animal Health Ireland, 2-5 The Archways, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, N41 WN27

