

Texas Dairy Matters

Higher Education Supporting the Industry

TO DIP OR SPRAY EVALUATE THE ECONOMICS

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To keep dairies profitable in good times and bad, it pays to re-evaluate many practices on the dairy. One is whether to dip or spray teats. Many employees say spraying is faster. When deciding what is best for your herd, evaluate the quality and cost of the application.

Steve Spencer, professor emeritus at Penn State, evaluated dipping and spraying. When teats were dipped, 96% of the teats received coverage over at least 95% of the surface compared to only 87% coverage in the sprayed group.

Evaluate coverage in your own herd by looking at teats as cows exit the parlor. In most herds, better coverage is attained by dipping.

Dipping not only provides better coverage, it's generally more cost-effective. In Spencer's trial, it took 0.75 ounces per cow per day for teat dip and 1.4 ounces per cow for spraying.

An average Texas dairy herd has approximately 800 cows milking at any one time. If a good iodine teat dip costs \$5.00 per gallon, the savings amount to \$7400 in one year. Table 1 shows projected savings for dipping instead of spraying for a herd of 200, 500 and 1,000 cows.



Table 1: Estimated savings for switching from spraying to dipping teats after milking using a teat dip which costs \$5.00 per gallon.

Number of Cows			
	200	500	1000
Cost/day - Dip	\$ 5.86	\$ 14.65	\$ 29.30
Cost/day - Spray	10.94	27.35	54.70
Difference/day	5.08	12.70	25.40
Savings/mo (30 d),\$	152.40	381.00	762.00
Savings/year, \$	1854.20	4635.50	9271.00

Deciding whether to post-dip or spray is an important decision. Consider employee morale, health of the cows, and the economic impact of the decision you make.

In an average Texas herd, the choice between dipping and spraying amounts to \$600 per month, while in a 1000 cow herd it is more than \$750 per month. Use this economic data to make the best decision for your herd. If you decide to change to dipping, share the cost figures with your milkers. It might help make the change easier.