EVALUATION OF TEAT COVERAGE WITH AN AUTOMATIC POST MILKING TEAT DISINFECTANT SYSTEM USING SIX DIFFERENT SPRAY DURATION SETTINGS

Brian R Pocknee1, Ian C Ohnstad2, Colin Kingston2, Richard Hiley3, Carl M’Graw2, Richard May2 and Mark Cinderey2
1 The Dairy Group, Taunton, Somerset, UK; 2 Ambic Equipment Ltd, Witney, Oxfordshire, UK

INTRODUCTION

It is recognized within the industry that manual application of post-milking teat disinfectant is extremely varied between teats, with less than acceptable coverage on many farms. This was confirmed in a study of teat spraying in 2013 (1). It was suggested that an automatic system would remove this variation and improve disinfectant more consistently. In this study Locate’n’Spray™ automated teat spray devices were installed at six stalls on a 60 point rotary parlour. Between June and the beginning of August 2014 an observation and evaluation study was carried out by The Dairy Group over 12 milkings, using six different spray timing regimes. The objective was to assess teat barrel and teat end coverage.

EVALUATION METHOD

Teat barrel and teat end coverage were assessed post application of the teat disinfectant product, using the system described in 2013 (1). The spray duration regimes evaluated were:

- 0.5 seconds
- 0.75 seconds
- 1.0 second
- 1.5 seconds
- 2.0 seconds
- 2.75 seconds

The spray duration regimes were set randomly.

The aim was to obtain teat coverage scores for each spray regime for at least 100 cows. Due to herd size of around 550 cows in milk, and 10% of stalls having the automatic spray system installed, the evaluation was carried out at the afternoon and the following morning milking. Due to the seasonal calving pattern, the number of cows in milk for the 0.75 second spray duration was less than other regimes.

RESULTS

Table 1. Teat end and teat barrel coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spray Duration</th>
<th>Average % for All Teats</th>
<th>Average % for Left Teats</th>
<th>Average % for Right Teats</th>
<th>Average % for All Teats</th>
<th>Average % for Left Teats</th>
<th>Average % for Right Teats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5 seconds</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.75 seconds</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 seconds</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 seconds</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 seconds</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75 seconds</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Relationship between spray duration and volume of disinfectant used

Figure 2. Average teat barrel coverage by spray regime

A comparison of the results of the 2013 manual and the 2014 automatic teat spraying studies indicates a greater amount of chemical is used with all time regimes for the automatic system compared to the average for manual spraying. However, there is uniformity and consistency with automation in teat barrel coverage (figure 2) as teat end coverage. This is a significant improvement on manual teat spraying. Within any one automatic spray regime the maximum variation in barrel coverage between front and rear teats and left and right teats was 6.7% and 5.2%, respectively. There was only a 4.0% difference in teat end coverage, but in contrast, the variation for manual spraying was 15.8%.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that an automatic spray system can achieve the aim of applying disinfectant consistently with acceptable levels of coverage, with a minimum of 96% of teat ends and between 61.8% and 90.0% of teat barrels covered (depending on spray duration).

Therefore the automation of Locate’n’Spray™ provides a level of process control which delivers consistently superior teat coverage and consistently higher teat end hit rates compared with manual spraying. The associated benefit of time saving in the parlour allows better targeting of labour, benefiting udder health and milking management, but partly offset by higher chemical consumption.

REFERENCE