



SUNLIGHT RAPID MASTITIS TEST (RMT)

AIM: TO INFORM FARMERS HOW TO MAKE AND CARRY OUT A RAPID MASTITIS TEST USING SUNLIGHT DISHWASHING LIQUID AS A TEST FOR SUBCLINICAL MASTITIS.

NOTE: This fact sheet is one of a series on mastitis and milking practices.

1. What is subclinical mastitis?

- Mastitis is an infection of the udder. It is caused by bacteria entering the teat opening.
- The infection can cause subtle changes and you may not see changes in the cow, or her milk. This is called **SUBCLINICAL MASTITIS**.

2. How do I know if my animal has subclinical mastitis?

- A sudden reduction in milk can be an indication of subclinical mastitis.
- You can make a Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT) using green Sunlight dishwashing liquid to check for signs of an infection in the milk.

3. How to make the RMT solution

To make the RMT solution you will need:

- ✓ Clean water;
- ✓ Bottle of Original green Sunlight dishwashing liquid;
- ✓ Clean cup for measuring;
- ✓ Clean jug for mixing.



Steps to make the Sunlight RMT solution:

1. Put 4 cups of clean water into the clean measuring jug;
2. Put 1 cup of green Sunlight into the measuring jug with the water;
3. Mix the water and green Sunlight together.

This gives a ratio of 4 parts water to 1 part Sunlight (4:1)

4. How to carry out the RMT:

To carry out the RMT you will need:

- ✓ Sunlight RMT solution (green Sunlight mixed with water – *see above*);
- ✓ Mastitis paddle with 4 wells. If you don't have a paddle, you can cut off the base of a plastic water bottle to make a container.





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Procedure to carry out the RMT test

- ✓ *Discard the first **TWO** squirts* of milk from one teat. Put the 3rd and 4th squirts of milk from the same teat into one well of the mastitis paddle. Remember which quarter this milk came from.
- ✓ Repeat for the remaining 3 teats.
- ✓ Add the same amount of Sunlight RMT as that of milk to each well.
- ✓ Gently rock the paddle to mix the Sunlight RMT and milk.
- ✓ Turn the paddle sideways and check for changes in thickness of the mixture. The result is:
 - **NEGATIVE** (no mastitis detected) if the mixture stays watery.
 - **POSITIVE** (mastitis detected) if the mixture becomes thicker and looks like mucous.
- ✓ Record results in a book. **REMEMBER**, note down the cow and the quarter(s) which was/were positive using the test.



Negative result



Positive result

REMEMBER: carry out the test in a well-lit area so you can see the reaction (change in consistency of the Sunlight / milk mixture).

5. What to do if an animal has subclinical mastitis

- ✓ If you detect subclinical mastitis test the cow again at the next milking. **DO NOT** treat unless you see signs of clinical mastitis (visible clots in the milk, swollen quarter, etc).
- ✓ Continue to monitor her until her milk does not cause a positive reaction using the RMT.

REMEMBER:

- Mastitis can be more common during the wet season;
- Always use **good milking hygiene** and **practices**;
- **Prevention** is better and often cheaper than treatment;
- *See fact sheets on practices, overview, prevention and treatment.*

Contact your local extension or veterinary officer for more information.

ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP on zdtpinfo@primeconsultants.net. Follow us on www.zambiadairy.com, Facebook (facebook.com/zambiadairy/) and Twitter (@DairyZambia).