

Looking Out For The Environment

Simple Steps to Calibrate and Maintain Your Spray Equipment

To avoid needless ag chemical waste, improper application and potential water contamination, calibrate your spray equipment at least once a year. Follow these 10 easy steps:



1 Fill your sprayer tank with water. Only use clean water to calibrate.

2 Measure the distance (in inches) between the nozzles on your spray boom. Then refer to the chart below.

3 Choose the Test Course Length (in feet) from the accompanying chart. For directed and band rigs use the row spacing of the field you plan to spray. Measure the course distance in the field and flag it for easy visibility.

4 Drive the test course at your normal spraying speed. Be sure to operate all equipment. The important step here is to record the seconds it takes to drive the measured distance. You'll use that number later. Be sure to take a "running start" at the starting flag so your tractor/sprayer reaches the desired speed before you begin timing.

5 Park your tractor/sprayer, set your brakes, but keep the engine rpm at the same setting used to drive the test course.

6 Set the desired pressure on your sprayer (this will vary with the type of spray tips you use and the gallons per minute you wish to spray through them).

7 Using a plastic container marked in ounces (a bottle or measuring cup works fine), collect the water sprayed from one nozzle during the same amount of time you found that it took you to drive the test course.

8 The amount of water collected in ounces per nozzle equals gallons per acre applied. Vary the sprayer pressure slightly to fine tune your overall output.

9 Be sure to check your nozzles by measuring the flow of each nozzle on the boom to assure uniform distribution. If the flow rate of any tip is 10% greater or less than that of the others, replace it. If two or more are faulty, replace all tips on the entire boom. The total expense involved is small compared to the cost of wasted product or environmental harm. Whatever type of spray tip you choose, be sure to use all the same type on your boom.

10 Last but not least, be sure to read the product label for proper application information.

Nozzle Spacing (in.)	Test Course Length (ft.)
40	102
38	107
36	113
34	120
32	127
30	136
28	146
26	157
24	170
22	185
20	204
18	227
16	255
14	291
12	340
10	408

Take Time to Calibrate

Faced with production deadlines, farmers' common sense often takes a back seat when it's time to calibrate spray equipment. Complex formulas and time-consuming calculations can be discouraging. But calibration errors add excess chemical costs, reduced yields and increased potential for water contamination. So, use this quick, 10-step method to calibrate your sprayer.



by

