

## **Dairy Biosecurity—the Best of the Best**

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Since the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in Great Britain, there have been many articles suggesting biosecurity measures for dairies. These articles have covered many topics including foreign visitors, vehicles, in-coming livestock and wildlife control. Here are some of the best ideas that have shown up lately.

Reporting to the main office – signs at the dairy entrance to the dairy should direct all visitors to the main office of the dairy before they go into the interior of the dairy where the livestock are housed. Someone in the office should ask a few pertinent questions about the visitor's recent contact with farm animals on other livestock facilities and determine what access the visitor will be permitted to have on the dairy. The office personnel can also prescribe what protective clothing the visitor must wear while visiting the dairy.

People movement on the dairy – hands, coveralls and boots can carry potentially dangerous bacteria from a contaminated place to another place on the dairy. Places of high risk for pickup dangerous bacteria are the inside of calf hutches where there are scouring calves, the fresh cow pen and the hospital pen. Workers in these pens should cleanup before they move on to work in other areas. To make cleanup easy, there should be a sink with hot and cold water for hand washing, high pressure water for cleaning boots, and buckets large enough to step into a disinfectant solution. A change of coveralls should be provided. On large dairies, workers should be assigned to the high risk areas and not move to other areas. On smaller dairies, worker should begin the day in low risk areas and end up in the high-risk areas to reduce the chances of moving harmful bacteria.

Maintain healthy animals – routinely vaccinate the herd against the common diseases such as IBR, BVD, Leptospirosis, J-5 for mastitis and the Clostridial diseases. Be sure to closely follow the vaccine label directions to insure maximum protection. Healthy animals can withstand the challenge of disease much better than sick ones. Decrease stress due to heat by providing adequate shade, ventilation and water. Provide enough pens so that animals of different ages are not mixed. House the fresh and sick animals separately. Have a pen specifically for newly arriving animals so that they can be isolated for 2-3 weeks.

Care of the calving area – many diseases that rapidly affect calves (E coli scours, cryptosporidia, Salmonellosis) and some that don't show clinical signs for many years (Johnes) begin in the calving area soon after birth. Insist that the calving area be kept clean and free from manure buildup for the birth of each new calf. Provide facilities so

that workers can easily wash their hand between handling cows and newborn calves. Make sure that all udders are clean and disinfected prior to collecting colostrum. All buckets, bottle and feeding equipment should be kept clean enough to use in your kitchen to feed your kids!

Develop an employee-training program – a training program will insure that all employees understand the biosecurity program for your dairy. Understanding is often the key to compliance. Get feedback from the workers on the areas of your plan that they feel are unreasonable and figure out a way with them to get the task completed. Include training on the potential health hazards that the worker might encounter as they handle the animals on the dairy. Remind them that the fecal-oral route transmits most diseases therefore hand washing is essential. Prohibit workers from taking raw milk from the dairy for their home use.

By keying in on these suggestions and other biosecurity strategies, severe outbreaks of disease can be prevented on your dairy. You are encouraged to review these ideas with your herdsmen and dairy workers and begin to develop a biosecurity program that will work on your dairy.