

Dairyhealth BYTES

Number: 51 Biosecurity II

Your own reference source on dairy health



Ambic

Anco

Ayurvet

Bioret

Henke-Sass Wolf

Intracare

Livisto

Mervue Laboratories

Neogen

Termotecnica Pericoli

Staff and biosecurity

A critical component of farm biosecurity is ensuring staff are well trained and that you have the ability to trace where all farm inputs came from and where they went. For the purposes of traceability you must have adequate records of purchases, sales and movements. In the event of a disease occurring on your farm, valuable time can be lost trying to determine how far the disease may have spread. Sound record keeping can speed up this process and prevent the spread of the disease.

The boundary approach

Although somewhat simplistic in its approach, this management exercise is a good way to focus the minds of you and your team on the subject of biosecurity as it quickly identifies shortfalls on your farm.

Before going any further, there is one prerequisite to keep in mind at all times: biosecurity is like a chain – it is only as strong as its weakest link!

The starting point to this management exercise is to define a boundary around your farm and ideally this should have some physical form, such as a fence. In the dairy industry we have the challenge of outdoor grazing. One way of addressing this is to use this exercise for your buildings and to extrapolate from it those bits that are relevant to outdoor production. Then you need to draw up a list of everything that does, or could, cross that boundary. If this part of the exercise is done correctly it could easily take two or three weeks. This is because you will never complete a list of this type in one sitting. Pick the list up after a couple of days and you will add to it and repeat this process two or three times more. Also involve some of your farm staff as they know the farm and what really happens there. This topic is a very good one to have a brainstorming session on. If you are one of several similar company farms, why not compare results and rectify any deficiencies identified in your list. This is time well spent because, at the end of the day, the outcome of this exercise will determine the quality of your farm biosecurity.

The next stage is to look at every item on that list and ask whether it is essential that this item goes onto the farm? If the answer is 'No', stop it going on and you will have removed something that could possibly have brought disease on to the farm or posed a risk. If your answer is 'Yes' and it is considered essential, you need to define a protocol for minimising the risk of taking it on to the dairy farm.