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## The boundary approach

We can take staff food as an example of how to define a protocol for minimising the risk of taking something on to a dairy farm. On some farms staff food will be considered an essential item, but not on others, so we need to identify the risks.

The risks could include the introduction of salmonella, campylobacter, STEC, and disease-causing agents in raw meats as it is known that undercooking of meat can result in pathogens surviving the process. The same can be said for suboptimal pasteurisation. This, incidentally, is one reason why many countries have rules or laws relating to the feeding of swill (waste human foods) to animals.

This could result in the statement that:

*No employee or visitor shall take raw meat or unpasteurised dairy product on to the farm.*

Then, considering the risks associated with proximity, another rule could state:

*Staff may only take food on to the farm as long as it is immediately taken to and stored in the designated cupboard or fridge. It must also be consumed only in the designated canteen area. Food must never be taken to an area where there are live animals.*

## Staff/visitor risks

The concept of proportionality will also come into play with some of the risks we will have identified. For example, what is the cost of preventing the problem, such as the entry of a pathogen? Basically, what is the point of spending \$1,000 to save \$100?

So, in deciding what measures to take, we have to consider what the costs will be if our biosecurity fails. The costs of a disease outbreak will increase as we go up the breeder pyramid. Thus, a small dairy farmer may consider he is adequately managing the visitor risk by providing overalls and boots, whereas the pedigree breeder would require a much more stringent regimen. This would include permission from head office for the visit to occur and for the visitor to stay free of cattle and other ruminants for 48 hours. On arriving at the farm, the first thing the visitor should do is sign a compliance declaration confirming that he has had no animal contact. Then at the farm he should put on clothing provided by the company.