



Ambic

Arm &amp; Hammer

Bioret

Boumatic

GEA

Intracare

Lallemand

Le Gouessant

Neogen

Norel

Mirius

Silvateam

Special Nutrients

Wisium/Neovia

## Contamination on the body

People entering your unit can act as a fomite and mechanically carry disease-causing micro-organisms onto the dairy farm, especially into the calf house, on their clothing and boots. This is particularly significant in the calf house as, here, we will have young, susceptible animals confined in a limited air space.

The parts of the body that can be implicated are the hands and, if exposed, the forearms and everything from the neck up, including the mouth, nose, ears, skin, hair and beards.

You might well ask how these can become contaminated? Well, obviously, there is physical contact but there is also another way. If you go into a confined space containing animals it is amazing how many bacteria and viruses can be present. These may well contain respiratory pathogens which you can pick up on your skin, but they may also become trapped in the hair or up your nose.

### • Bacterial load in the hair

You can demonstrate the bacterial load in hair quite easily. Wash your hair and rinse thoroughly and then collect some of the water from the last rinse and keep to one side. Dry your hair and go into an occupied dairy for 15 or 20 minutes. Then, with a sterile bowl and some sterile water, wash your hair again and collect some of this water. You now have two samples – from before and after – which can go to the laboratory for quantitative microbiological testing. Typically, you will see a difference between the two counts of several logs, for example a TVC of approximately 120 cfus per ml for the first and one of 235,000 cfus per ml for the second. The only place those extra bacteria can have come from is the air in the dairy.

Loose, free flowing air is an ideal tool for catching airborne bacteria. We must therefore be sure that on entry to our herd all visitors thoroughly wash their hair using a product containing an appropriate sanitiser.

### • Nostrils as a potential pathogen carrier

The other part of the body that could conceivably carry pathogenic organisms on to your farm is the nostrils. They contain an ideal environment and temperature for bacteria to grow.

Work has been done to show that if a person inhales mycoplasma they can sneeze them out of their nose at least 24 hours later. Here is a good reason for requiring three or more days of animal freedom before a visitor can enter the farm. Unfortunately, you cannot disinfect or fumigate a person's nostrils.

So, what do you do with a member of staff who can not apply three days of animal freedom before they come to work each day? All you can do is educate them on why it is important not to visit farms, abattoirs and similar high risk locations while they are working with your business.