



Best Practices for Biosecurity



Keeping calves healthy and alive is a critically important factor which contributes to a dairy farm's success and profitability. The job of keeping a calf healthy begins at birth. Birth to three months of age is the most sensitive rearing period for the young calf. With biological, environmental, and nutritional stressors, the success of the first rearing phase depends on calf managers and feeders paying special attention to detail.



Biosecurity refers to protecting a farm, the animals and people on that farm from pathogens. These pathogens can spread from outside the farm, move around within the farm or spread from one farm to another farm. To help ensure calves remain healthy, farmers should minimize the introduction of new diseases to the farm by developing and enforcing a strict biosecurity plan.



Animals, equipment, people and vehicles may all carry diseases between farms or between areas of the same farm. To combat disease, visitors should use plastic disposable boots or sanitize their footwear before entering animal facilities and at the end of the farm visit. When handling calves, wear gloves and wear clothing free of manure.

Disease Prevention

Use "all in-all out" by air space.

Completely clean and disinfect each pen between groups of calves.

Disinfectant selection is governed by many factors including:

- Type of surface to be disinfected.
- Temperature and other weather conditions.
- Effectiveness against specific diseases.
- Time required for the disinfectant to inactivate the organisms present.

The efficiency of all disinfectants is impaired by the presence of organic material. Thorough cleaning is required prior to use of any disinfectant.

Consult with your veterinarian to determine what type of disinfectant is best for your operation.

Consult with your veterinarian to develop your herd's vaccination and parasite prevention programs.

Adapted from: [Quality Assurance: A Program of America's Pork Producers Level III](#)

Originally developed by UW-Extension Oconto County Agriculture Agent Sarah Mills-Lloyd & Fond du Lac County Dairy & Livestock Agent Tina Kohlman for the Nestlé Dairy Farming Institute Curriculum and adapted for UW-Extension Dairy Team Heifer Blueprints. Updated 2022.

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Biosecurity Procedures

Know what diseases are present in your herd or within different age groups in your herd.

Ask your herd veterinarian to contact the veterinarian of your potential source of new youngstock to discuss their health monitoring procedures and their current health status.

Isolate new youngstock; test, vaccinate and/or medicate (if needed) new youngstock during the isolation period, and/or use other means to ensure you are not purchasing any health problems.

Limit the number of visitors to your farm and control their contact with your youngstock. You may question them about their last contact with other calves and the health level of the last herd contacted?

Supply each visitor with a complete set of clean coveralls and boots.

Require all visitors to wash their hands with soap before entering the calf barn.

Use a farm traffic pattern for both people and youngstock that prevents exposure of young calves to older heifers, cows or their manure.

Provide effective boot cleaning and disinfection stations and/or dedicated coveralls and boots at strategic sites of your farm.

Take additional precautions to prevent the introduction of a foreign animal disease to your herd.

- Require international visitors to observe a “bovine free time” according to the diseases present in the countries they are from or have visited and according to the risk of potential human transmission of these diseases to young stock.
- Require visitors or employees who have traveled internationally to wear farm-supplied clothing.
- Prohibit international visitors or employees from bringing imported food including meat products or drink onto your farm.
- Prohibit visitors or employees who have been traveling internationally from bringing any articles of clothing worn on farms or equipment from these sites onto your farm.

Prohibit truckers from entering facilities or loading chutes. Ensure they follow proper biosecurity measures, and the truck (tractor and trailer) is clean and disinfected when it arrives at your farm.

Change clothes after visiting other farms, livestock markets, or livestock fairs and shows.

Provide animal movement restrictions to avoid youngstock returning to the pen or farm following exposure to other animals or their manure.

Provide a designated, protected area for rendering pick up outside the perimeter of the farm.

Prohibit feed delivery and/or other trucks from entering lots or crossing animal traffic flow patterns.