

Biosecurity – Vehicles Visiting the Farm

SUMMARY

There are a number of actions individual farmers can take to minimise the risk of vehicles bringing disease onto their farms.

These include:

- Where possible keeping vehicles away from areas with livestock
- Effective cleaning and disinfection
- Making visitors aware of biosecurity precautions

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, farmers should have a contingency plan. In some cases, the authorities may specify what minimum biosecurity measures they would expect farmers and farm visitors to adhere to.

Introduction

Vehicle Access

Where possible arrange for vehicles to come no further than the farm boundary or at least be well separated from areas holding animals. If vehicles must visit the farmyard keep livestock away from these areas. If livestock must pass these areas, ensure the areas are cleaned before the vehicle visits (and afterwards if the vehicle was dirty). Where possible have a separate access route to the farmyard from the public road for visiting vehicles to the access route used regularly for livestock movements.

Delivery areas and collection points should be a hard standing such as concrete that can be readily cleaned and disinfected as necessary.

Ensure that access routes and delivery and collection points are adequately signed.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Disinfectants are inactivated by organic material such as manure, bedding and mud so they are not effective on dirty surfaces. Cleaning must be thorough to remove all traces of mud and

animal manure before disinfection is carried out. All soiling must be removed by washing using a hose and brush or power washer. For light soiling the act of cleaning and disinfection can be carried out in one step but for heavy soiling this is wasteful of expensive disinfectant. For heavy soiling cleaning with plain water or water and detergent is recommended before applying the disinfectant solution.

Ensure that washings do not run into areas used by livestock or cause pollution of watercourses.

Vehicle wheels are often cleaned and disinfected using automatic sprayers, manual (knapsack) sprayers, wheel bath or a straw mat. Systems will not be effective if they fail to remove sufficient organic material and what is removed contaminates the disinfectant. Also for fully effective cleaning and disinfection of wheels, the full tread of the tyres should be treated as well as the surrounding wheel arches and mudflaps.

In addition to the vehicle itself, all associated equipment must also be cleansed and disinfected eg tanker hoses, pipes etc.

Provision of washing and disinfection facilities for people's hands, boots and equipment etc is also recommended.

An appropriate disinfectant must be used. Information on approved disinfectants may be found on the SEERAD website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture/animal-welfare/Diseases/GenControls/15721/2960>

The disinfectant must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In particular, it must be at the correct dilution rate for the purpose and the water being used to dilute the product should be clean. Weak disinfectants or those made up with dirty water are ineffective in reducing the risk of disease transfer.

Other Measures

Where possible, be present when deliveries and collections are being made to check that the vehicles used are clean.

Use signage to make visitors aware of the biosecurity precautions they are expected to take.

In some circumstances it may be useful to maintain a record of all persons and vehicles visiting your farm. This could take the form of a visitors book at the farm entrance.

Disease Outbreak

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak in their area farmers should have a contingency plan which outlines how biosecurity measures will be increased. In addition to planned general measures, farmers should also consult their veterinary surgeon for advice on any specific measures that are recommended to combat the particular disease threat. In some cases, the authorities may specify what minimum biosecurity measures they

would expect farmers and farm visitors to adhere to.

The general measures to consider relating to visiting vehicles would include:-

- Minimise the number of vehicles coming onto the farm. Whilst it may not be possible to restrict access for every vehicle (eg the milk tanker), other deliveries can be taken at the farm boundary. This may include feed deliveries which could be blown from the delivery vehicle into a trailer instead of the vehicle coming right into the farmyard.
- Be present when vehicles do need to come onto the farm. Check that they are clean and have been disinfected, have not come from a higher risk infection area, and that any other precautions required are being implemented (eg filters fitted on milk tanker air vents).
- Provide cleaning and disinfection facilities for vehicles at the farm entrance as drivers are restricted in what they are able to carry for this purpose. The minimum provision should comprise a supply of water and suitable disinfectant, plus a brush, sprayer or power washer to apply it. Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected both on entering and leaving the farm premises.
- Personnel must wear suitable clean protective clothing and footwear such as disposable boiler suits or waterproof jacket and trousers that can be fully disinfected.
- Make all visitors aware of the precautions expected of them and check they are being followed. Ensure drivers have no direct contact with livestock.

Authors:

Derek Kennedy

Dairy Consultant
SAC Consulting
Dairy Services Unit
Hestan House, The Crichton, Dumfries DG1 4TA
Phone 01387 263961, Fax 01387 251789
derek.kennedy@sac.co.uk

Mark Crawshaw

Formerly Veterinary Centre Manager
SAC
Ayr Veterinary Centre
Auchincruive
Ayr KA6 6AE
Phone 01292 520318
Fax 01292 521069