

Technical Update – Biosecurity

Information correct as at 14:00pm on 03.07.2020

- Review Biosecurity practices and protocols to minimise disease spread
- Make sure everyone on the farm knows how diseases can be spread
- If you need to source cattle try to get as much information as possible about them
- Disinfect buildings and machinery thoroughly
- Ensure anyone coming onto the farm follows your protocols

Biosecurity is the practise of reducing opportunity for disease to spread to, and within, the herd. With lockdown gradually easing and things finding a “new normal”, more people and stock are on the move than we have seen over the last few months, so it is worth revisiting your biosecurity protocols.

Successful and well implemented plans for biosecurity include more than cleansing and disinfecting. Prudent sourcing of stock, on-farm quarantine and testing for specific diseases should all be considered. The single most effective way of spreading animal disease onto or off the farm is the movement of infected livestock, which may or may not be exhibiting signs of illness.

The responsibility lies with all members of staff to maintain and regularly review strategies for improving health and hygiene.

Infectious disease can be transmitted between livestock in many ways:

1. Through direct or indirect contact with infected animals and/or their muck, saliva etc.
2. Passed from mother to offspring- either in utero or via milk.
3. Through the environment- contaminated feed, water, bedding or pasture.
4. Through farm equipment-contaminated dosing guns, foot trimming knives, milking equipment, vehicles.
5. Airborne infection- shared breathing space.
6. Via another being who acts as a temporary host- other livestock, pests, wildlife or humans.

Minimise the risk of infectious transfer from other livestock:

- Try to maintain closed herd status.
- Move away from using stock bulls and reap numerous benefits with certified AI semen.
- Source animals (if necessary) from herd with known disease status ([Checklist](#)).
- Test animals being moved/purchased.
- Isolate animals for 4 weeks before inclusion into the main herd.
- Prevent contact from neighbouring farms: ideally double fencing with a gap of 3m and set neighbouring paddocks aside for silage.
- Prevent livestock from drinking from rivers or stagnant & potentially contaminated water sources.

Disinfection process:

- Adopt a “Surgically clean” mindset
- Use hot water when cleaning/pressure washing apparatus
- Use DEFRA approved disinfectant and scrub into the surface or apparatus (Virex, Virkon, Fam30)
- Allow disinfectant to work for 30 minutes before thoroughly rinsing

- Allow surfaces to DRY
- If cleaning calf hutches or cattle isolation pens, allow a rest time of up to two-weeks with no bedding to remove potential hosts and increase likelihood of pathogens dying

Isolation Facilities

Isolation facilities must be available, easy to clean, hygienic and prepared in case they are needed. They should not act as multi-purpose buildings as it defeats the integrity of the process.

- Isolate all bought in stock, know the signs of disease and look out for them. Discuss with your vet
- Run these animals through a daily footbath and worm / vaccinate / treat on arrival if required
- Put isolated animals through milking parlours etc last and disinfect after use
- Further Isolate sick or diseased animals immediately – notify your vet and the SVS at the first sign or suspicion of any notifiable disease

Waste Management

Pathogens, including those causing TB, can survive in slurry and farmyard manure. Responsible spreading of manure can help to prevent disease spread and will lessen the disease pressure on your unit.

- If possible, store manure and slurry for at least 4 months before application.
- Ideally spread on arable land or forage maize, if spreading on grassland use cutting leys and avoid applying slurry to grazing ground.
- Spread slurry using injection or trailing shoe.
- If using hired/shared spreaders or contractors wash down kit thoroughly and disinfect before and after using.

Knowledge of the Pathogen

Regular communication between your vet and farm team will encourage understanding of how pathogens become successful in spreading disease. Make sure you and your team know what you are dealing with to best prepare for robust farm biosecurity.

- Transmission routes- how is a pathogen spread?
- Incubation time- how long can the animal be infected without showing signs, but can still spread the disease?
- Morbidity- How quickly will the herd become infected?
- Mortality- What is the expected death rate?
- Survival on surfaces- How long can the pathogens survive outside a host?

For further discussion or to help with any questions that you may have, please contact Consultant Support on consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com or 01902 851007 / 07542 403225