BioSecure
Enhanced and cost-effective biosecurity in livestock production

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PRACTICE ABSTRACT # 26

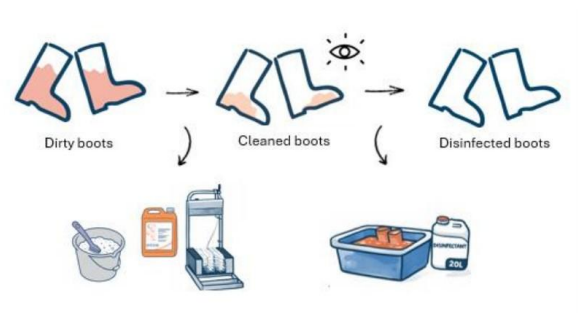
Implementing effective boot hygiene practices in farm settings

Boots represent a key but often underestimated risk for pathogen transmission as they frequently move between farms, outdoor environments, animal houses and compartments. Contaminants such as manure, bedding material, and moisture adhering to boots can harbour large numbers of pathogens and organic material (such a faeces), and can remain infectious for hours to days, facilitating both within-farm and between farm transmission.

Effective boot hygiene must consist of both a cleaning and a disinfection step. **The cleaning step is a critical prerequisite for effective disinfection** as organic matter can protect pathogens and reduce disinfectant efficacy. As a rule, **boots must be visibly clean before disinfection**. Cleaning is best performed using water and a detergent, combined with brushing or boot washers. For effective disinfection, the disinfectant solution should be prepared according to the product label, the contact time between the boots and the solution should be respected, and the solution should be refreshed regularly and more frequently when organically contaminated. The use of disinfectant boot baths without prior cleaning has been found to be ineffective and can lead to a false sense of security as ineffective boot hygiene results in boots that still form a risk for pathogen transmission.

Farm-specific and compartment-specific boots help prevent pathogen entry from outside and reduce spread within the farm, while allowing cleaning and disinfection at set times, such as the end of the day, to improve practicality and compliance. **Color-coded boots can make zone assignment clearer** and reduce mistakes, especially on larger farms, and strict boot protocols are essential in quarantine and isolation areas, where these boots must stay within the designated zone.

Consistent implementation by all farm personnel and visitors is crucial for success. Clear protocols, practical infrastructure, and regular evaluation of routines help ensure that boot hygiene measures are applied correctly and remain feasible in daily practice.



- Boot hygiene must consist of both a cleaning and a disinfection step
- Boots must be cleaned until visually clean before effective disinfection
- Farm- and compartment specific boots help protect the farm from entry and spread of disease

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