BioSecure
Enhanced and cost-effective biosecurity in livestock production

PRACTICE ABSTRACT # 34

Changing how we talk about biosecurity on pig farms in Ireland

Keeping out or stopping the spread of disease on indoor pig farms requires consistency. Everyone needs to know what to do, when to do it and how. Yet, conversations about evaluating and improving biosecurity are often a one-to-one audit between a vet and farm owner. This study aims to change the flow of information (Figure 1) about biosecurity from a traditional top-down process to a collaborative community-based approach.

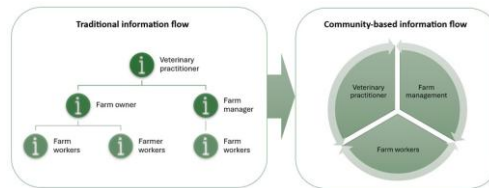


Figure 1.

Objectives:

- A veterinarian and a psychologist delivered collaborative workshops (Figure 2) to the whole farm community: owners, managers and workers.

-Participants' own priorities for improving biosecurity were explored, areas going well and requiring improvements were discussed by the whole farm community and veterinarian, and achievable, realistic goals were set as part of a shared decision-making process.

Results:

A biosecurity questionnaire can be used as an interactive tool to involve the whole farm community. Changes to boot washing, truck disinfection, cleaning and disinfection, deadstock management and cross-fostering were successfully implemented on farms. Farm staff were included in identifying solutions that worked for them and they understood the rationale for these changes. A stronger collective ownership and understanding of biosecurity was observed.

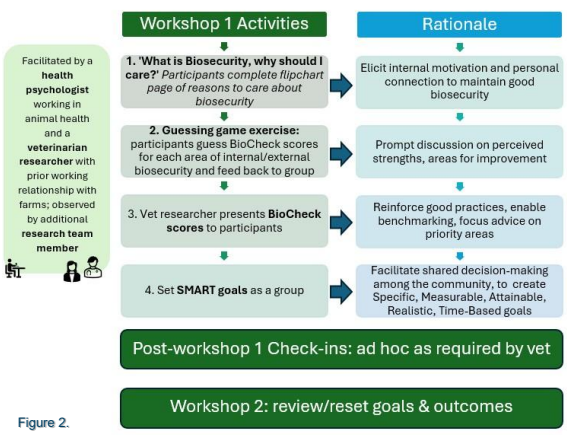


Figure 2.

Practical recommendations:

- Goals set together should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.
- Pairing a new behaviour to something that is already embedded in routine can create a new habit over time.
- Find a way to measure progress, like capturing how much extra hand soap is used per week.

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