



Cleaning and Disinfection: What's the Difference?

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Because of the events of the last two years, all of us are more familiar with health measures. You were encouraged to wash your hands and disinfect surfaces and objects with which you came into contact, primarily to protect yourself, but also to prevent the spread of germs or pathogens. These same concepts apply to biosecurity in dairy farms.



As you know, proper cleaning and disinfection is necessary to prevent the spread of pathogens from one farm to another. Cleaning and disinfection are terms that may seem interchangeable, but in reality, they are not. So, what's the difference?

Cleaning

The objective of cleaning is to remove organic matter and dirt from surfaces and objects with water and soap. Cleaning also reduces the number of germs without necessarily killing them. This is why cleaning is followed by disinfection. Let's take hand washing as an example. Soap and water are used to physically remove dirt and reduce the number of germs, but a small number of germs always remain on the hands. The surface of your hands is then clean. The same concept applies to the cleaning of your buildings, work tools, etc.

Disinfection

The objective of disinfection is to kill germs with disinfectants. Ideally, disinfection should be preceded by cleaning to maximize the effectiveness of the disinfectant. Think about boot disinfection on the farm. A disinfectant approved for this purpose is used to inactivate pathogens on the surface. The surface of your boots is then sterile.

In conclusion...

For biosecurity to be effective, cleaning and disinfection must go hand in hand. Implementing these best practices will benefit the health of your herd... and your wallet. This is the best way to protect your herd, but also to avoid the spread of pathogens in your neighbourhood and elsewhere!

Resource:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. (2013). *Biosecurity for Canadian Dairy Farms: National Standard*.

https://inspection.canada.ca/DAM/DAM-animals-animaux/STAGING/text-texte/terr_biosec_dairy_standards_1360169547274_eng.pdf

By Elouise Molgat, D.M.V.

Graduated from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Université de Montréal in 2021, Elouise started off her career as a veterinarian working at a farm animal clinic in Eastern Ontario. She has a strong background in dairy production and animal welfare. She also is a dairy farmer in Eastern Ontario with her in-laws.