Maintain a high level of hygiene on your farm

How?

- Enforce hygiene practices on your farm by:
  - Frequent hand washing
  - Wearing clean work clothes
  - Car washing
  - Changing of clothes and footwear

Why?

VTEC O157 can be present in even a small amount of dung. It can be transferred between animals, groups or herds by unclean vehicles, clothes, tools, etc.

Newly infected animals shed large amounts of VTEC O157.

Keep your farm clean and tidy

By applying one or more of these practices, you will improve the health and safety for you, your staff, family and visitors.

For further information, please see

'*Common zoonoses in agriculture*' at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais2.pdf or www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/index.htm

For further information about human disease caused by VTEC O157, see www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/ecoli/0157/menu.htm

Or contact: (RL – address sticker)

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VTEC O157 in cattle

What is VTEC O157?

- An *E. coli* bacterium that can cause serious human disease especially in young children.
- It is commonly found in farm animal dung and saliva especially in young stock (3-18 months).
- Farm workers and people visiting farms are at risk when in direct contact with farm animals.
- It can be transferred to humans from food, milk, animal contact and through water or soil where infected dung has been spread.

Staff, family and visitors on a farm are at risk. Young children can become seriously ill.

This leaflet recommends control measures, which can be applied to reduce VTEC O157 in the dung on your farm.

These recommendations are part of good husbandry practices, which may also improve general herd health and welfare.

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Keep a closed herd policy

How?

- Breed your own replacement animals.
- Buy larger batches fewer times a year.
- Avoid mixing new animals with the established herd - especially young stock.

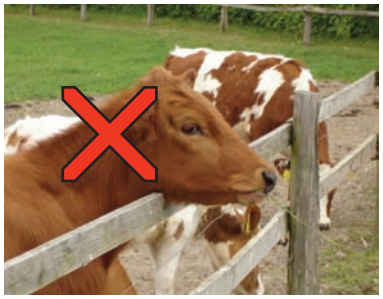
Why?

New animals can introduce VTEC O157 onto your farm and may also cause stress in an already established herd.

Avoid contact with animals from other herds

How?

- Keep show animals separate when they return to the farm.
- Avoid co-grazing with animals from other herds.
- Avoid nose-to-nose contact by:
  - Double fencing or
  - Grazing young stock next to empty fields.



Why?

Animals from other farms may pass VTEC O157 to your animals.

The stress caused by contact with unfamiliar cattle may increase the shedding of VTEC O157.

Store manure, slurry and dirty water for at least two weeks

Why?

Bacteria can survive in the soil for a long time and infect grazing cattle. Storage will generate a lethal environment for bacteria and kill them before the manure and slurry is spread onto fields.

Keep bedding very dry and clean in young stock enclosures

How?

- Daily assess the wetness of bedding in young stock enclosures.
  - Any “squelchy” sound is too wet!
- Regularly clean out bedding.
- Quickly repair leaking pipes and troughs.
- Move water troughs outside the enclosure.
- Move water troughs to a bedding-free area.

Why?

Bacteria die more quickly in a dry and clean environment and will not be able to reinfect other animals.

Maintain stable rearing groups

How?

- Wean calves in groups.
- Buy animals fewer times a year.
- Avoid mixing groups of young stock.

Why?

Every time a new animal is added to an already established group of animals, the social pattern is disrupted. This may lead to stress and excretion of more dung. Also, stressed animals appear to shed more VTEC O157.

A new animal may provide a new host, which the bacteria can infect.

Animals which are infected for the first time, shed more VTEC O157 than animals who have been infected for a long time.