

“Smittsäkrad besättning” - A Swedish biosecurity program for cattle farms – to be launched in 2015

A new biosecurity program for cattle herds in Sweden, “Smittsäkrad besättning”, is under development and is planned to be launched in 2015. Previous organized measures against infectious diseases in Sweden have been designed as control programs; each focused on one specific agent (for example bovine leucosis, bovine paratuberculosis, bovine viral diarrhoea virus (BVDV) and salmonella). These programs have been successful in controlling the specific infection, but not as successful in terms of generally increasing the biosecurity level. Recent research has shown that Swedish cattle farmers in comparison with pig farmers have a lack of knowledge on the spread and prevention of infectious diseases, and there were also large variation between herds regarding biosecurity measures (Nöremark et al). Structural changes with increased herd size and increased production costs as well as public health concerns including the development of antibiotic resistance are demanding a higher level of biosecurity in cattle herds. The aim of the new biosecurity program is to increase the biosecurity in cattle herds by enhancing the farmers’ knowledge of how infectious diseases are spread between farms and how this can be prevented, and to provide tools for implementing on-farm biosecurity routines.

The program consists of two levels; base and advanced. All criteria for the base level needs to be fulfilled before accessing the advanced level. The base level includes an on-line theoretical course and an on-line questionnaire designed to identify the biosecurity risks for each farm. The risk assessment inquiry is covering eight areas; animal contacts (with other cattle herds), visitors and staff, transports and shared equipment, stall hygiene and health monitoring, feed, manure and environmental sources. The advanced level includes a veterinary visit and a biosecurity course. The veterinary visit is repeated every second year. It consists of a control part where the farm has to pass basic biosecurity and hygiene check points, and an education part. The education part is based on the result of the on-line risk assessment and the control check points.

For both levels there are regulations for animal movements. Animals can only be bought in from herds that are on the same or higher level of the program and all herds that sell animals must be enrolled in the BVDV programme. In addition, all dairy herds that sell animals to other herds within the program need to be tested negative for *Salmonella* spp., *Streptococcus agalactiae* and *Mycoplasma bovis*. The analyses are carried out on bulk tank milk samples four times per year by automatic subscription.

Herds enrolled in the program are entitled to higher economic compensation in case of salmonellosis from the Board of Agriculture. In Sweden, detection of salmonella in a herd implies hygiene and eradication measures that often are costly. Other economic advantages might also be incorporated in the program, this is currently under investigation. The program has an open-access web page with information on infectious diseases and biosecurity measures (Smittsäkra.se), it also includes animations and videos where farmers are sharing their lessons learned after experienced an infectious outbreak. The program has been developed by Växa Sverige in cooperation with Swedish Animal Health Service (Svenska Djurhälsovården) and the National Veterinary Institute, and the work is financed by the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

Sofie Anderson, DVM, sofie.andersson@vxa.se
Anna Ohlson, DVM, PhD, anna.ohlson@vxa.se
Växa Sverige, Box 30204, 104 25 Stockholm