

A young brown calf is lying in a bed of straw in a barn. The calf's head is resting on the straw, and its large, pinkish ears are prominent. The background shows a metal fence and the interior of a barn.

TOGETHER FOR STRONGER CALF HEALTH

Dr. Stephanie Gauta

ABOUT ME!

- Veterinarian
 - 9 months private practice
 - 6+ years with ST Genetics at the Ohio Heifer Center
 - Maternity Barn Manager
- Hobbies/Interests:
 - Novice Gardener
 - Brown Swiss Breeder
- Fun facts:
 - Grew up waitressing at my family's pizzeria
 - Aiming to start my own dairy in the next few years!



ST GENETICS

- World leader in bovine genetics, genomic testing, chromosomal mating and reproduction technologies
- The best way to predict the future is to create it



OHIO HEIFER CENTER

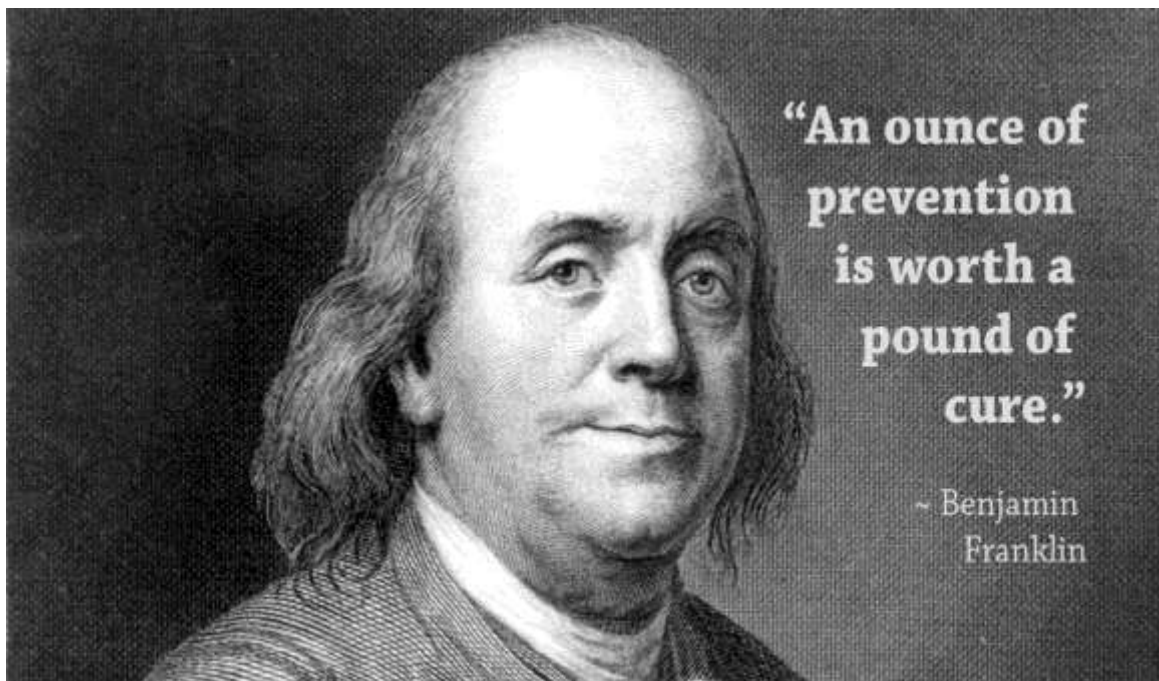
- 75 hectares
- 13 barns for cattle
- 4,000-6,000 head
- 3 sheds for manure recycling and composting
- Feed center – 2 barns and 3 forage bunkers



MATERNITY BARN



WHY BIOSECURITY MATTERS ON YOUR FARM?



- Significant Financial Losses
 - Lost of genetic potential
 - Veterinary expenses
 - Increased labor costs
- Reduced Herd Productivity
 - Milk yield and quality
- Human Health Risk
- Labor drain
- Reputation

BIOSECURITY ISN'T A RULE IT'S A ROUTINE



- Teamwork keeps calves healthy every day
- Most farms don't fail at biosecurity because they don't care
- They fail because expectations aren't clear or consistent
- Today we're talking about how people – not products – make biosecurity work

WHY BIOSECURITY BREAKS DOWN ON FARMS



- Too many rules, not enough routines
- ‘Everyone does it their own way’
- New employees aren’t trained clearly
- No one owns the process

HABITS BEAT RULES

The 3 R's of Habit Formation



- Habits happen automatically
- Rules get forgotten under pressure
- How do we transform biosecurity into a habit?
 - Habit formation takes 59-66 days (Singh)
 - Morning practices and self-selected habits had the greatest influence on habit strength (Singh)

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ROUTINE?

- Simple
- Repeatable
- Visible
- Trainable



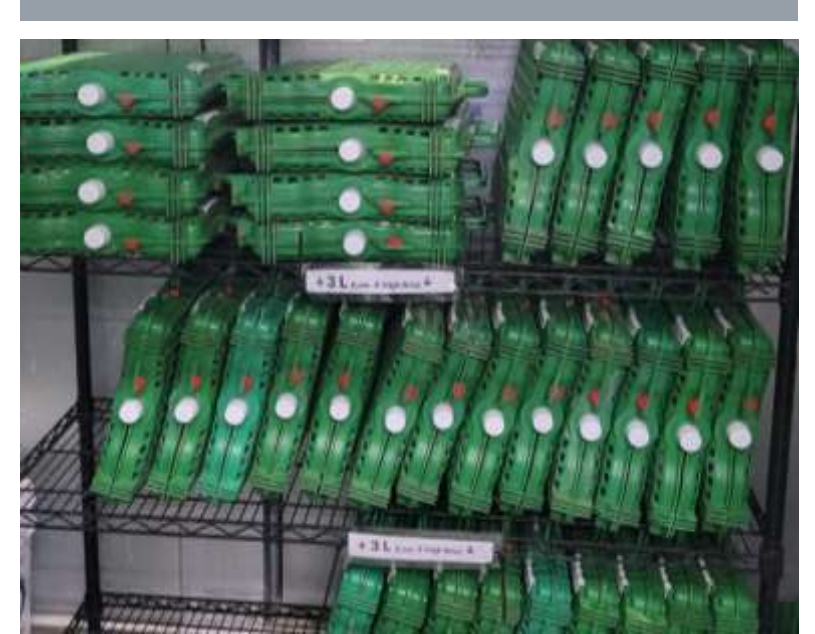
OUR ROUTINES – CALVING PENS

- Individual boxstalls for active calving
 - Limit time the cows are in the stall
 - Fresh bedding added between uses
 - Hand pitch manure/placenta
- Ideally, clean and disinfect after every calving
 - Practical, every 3-5 calvings disinfect/clean
- Clean and disinfect weekly
 - Split the chores between the shifts
 - Prioritize it on “slow” nights
- Calf transport



OUR ROUTINES - COLOSTRUM

- Colostrum Harvesting
- Colostrum Handling and Storage
 - Bacterial growth can double every 20 mins at room temp.
 - < 24 hours refrigeration, < 6 months freezer
- Pasteurization
 - Effective kills Salmonella, E coli, Mycobacterium avium ssp. paratuberculosis (MAP), etc. (Ganz)
 - Improves IgG absorption (Elizondo-Salazar)
- Label cassettes – Date, Donor, Quantity/Quality



CALF ROUTINES

- Structure movement based on Biosecurity level
 - Youngest to oldest to sickest
 - Limit entry into high risk areas
- Boot washes and Gloves
- Keep aisles clean
- Crib = safe zone for the calf
 - Limit traffic
- Navel Care – clean dippers!



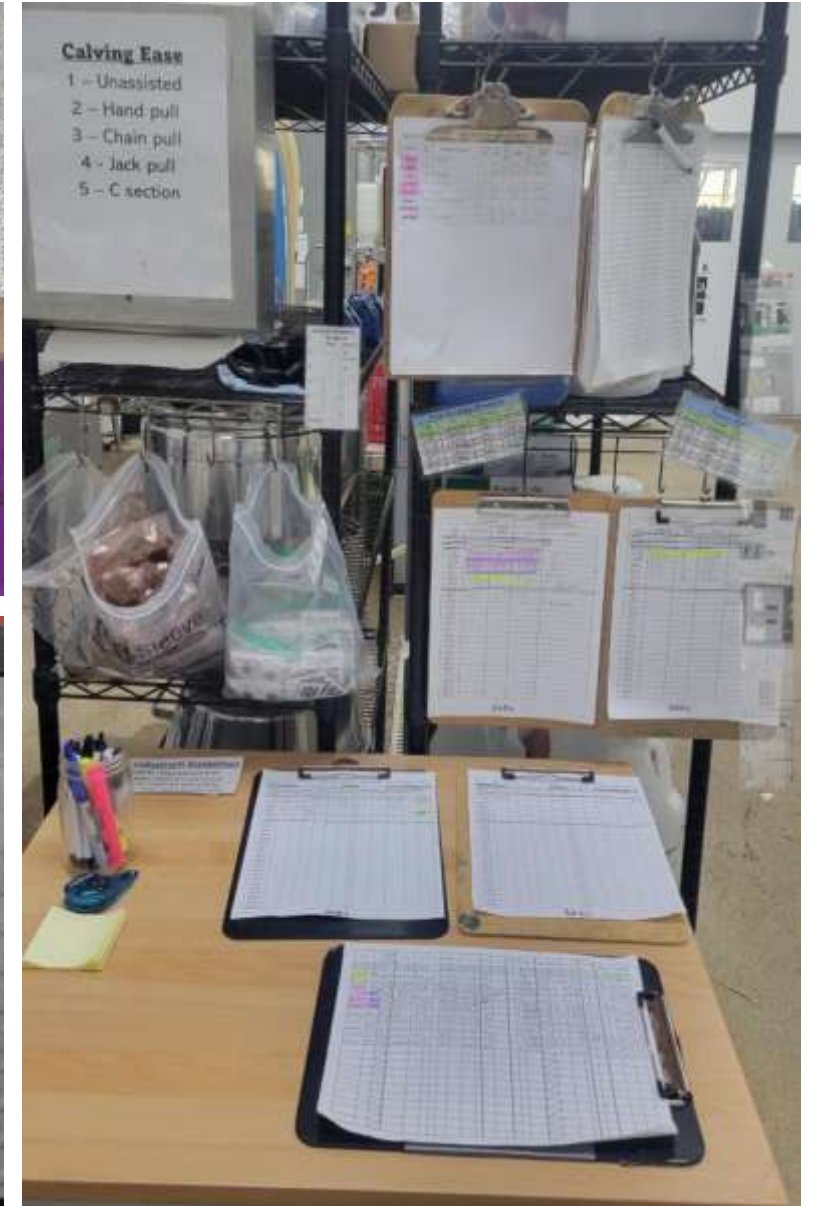
WHY CLEAR ROUTINES REDUCE DISEASE



- Less variation = fewer mistakes
- Less thinking during busy times
- Easier to catch problems

WRITTEN PROTOCOLS THAT ACTUALLY GET USED

- Effective Protocols are
 - Short
 - Visual
 - In the work area
- Visual cues make habits stick



TRAINING NEW EMPLOYEES



Train

Train how and why, not just what

Demonstrate

Demonstrate, then watch them do it

Reinforce

Reinforce early

CONSISTENCY ACROSS SHIFTS

- Challenges
 - Different shifts, different habits
 - That's how day shift does it
 - Dayshift vs Nightshift culture
 - Communication
 - Team bonding

PIZZA PARTIES

Day Shift VS Night Shift



Morgan · 4:05 PM
Update:
No failures
Had no calves

Moved up calving pens

Scraped the back alley and got straw for cribs, 357 was cleaned as well

7 cribs to clean

No fresh cows but sent hobbles and both cws looked better, they had normal temps




WHEN ROUTINES DRIFT

- Warning signs
 - Equipment smells sour
 - Just this once shortcuts
- Ask why shortcuts happen
 - Don't jump to conclusions
 - Better systems can beat stricter rules



LEADERSHIP SETS THE TONE



Leaders set the tone for their peers.
Peers look up to them and say,
'They're doing it, so I'm doing it.'

Chris Bosh

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- **Follow the routine themselves**
- Support Employee
 - Praise correct behavior
 - Keep the line of communication open
- Provide tools needed

TEAM MEETINGS THAT IMPROVE BIOSECURITY

- Review routines
- Share problems
 - Equipment needed
- Suggest improvements
 - Involvement increase buy-in
- Cultivate the “Our barn, our success” mentality
- Team Bonding

“

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up.

– Oliver Wendell Holmes

”

MEASURING SUCCESS

Quick and Easy...



Results in 15 seconds

	1/31/2025	
Calf Equipment:	ATP Level	Interpretation
Bottle Holder (in use or clean)	0 clean	Excellent
Bucket (in use or clean)	21 clean	Excellent
Clean Bottle Cart	1	Excellent
Clean Colostrum Bottle	13	Excellent
Clean Nipple	1	Excellent
Colostrum Nipple	0	Excellent
Tube Feeder	0	Excellent
Mixing/Colostrum Room Equ	ATP Level	Intrepretation
Milk Mixer	0	Excellent
7 Spicket Milk Dispenser	1	Excellent
Dispensing Hose	7	Excellent
Colostrum Funnel	6	Excellent

- Fewer sick calves
 - ADG, morbidity, mortality
 - ATP meter
- Less confusion
- Faster training
- Better morale

TAKE HOME MESSAGE



- Biosecurity is a habit, not a checklist
- Clear routines protect calves
- Teamwork makes it sustainable
- Simple and consistent wins



THANK YOU!! ANY QUESTIONS?

CITATIONS

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