

Dairy Farm Workers should be aware of the risks related to the job tasks they perform on a daily basis. Besides protecting yourselves against kicks and other injuries, farm workers need to protect themselves against diseases that they may get from the cows they are working with. Contact with urine, feces, saliva, the placenta and other calving fluids can result in human diseases. The cross over from animal to human disease is called zoonosis.



Just as you go to the doctor when you have a wound of physical injury, you should also visit the doctor when you or a family member feels sick. It is very important that you tell your doctor that you work with animals. This piece of information will help the doctor make a correct diagnosis and prescribe the correct treatment.



### **Dairy Management Program in Spanish**

For more information contact:

Nancy Weiss

Colorado State University

Department of Animal Science

1171 Campus Delivery

Fort Collins, CO 80523-1171

Phone: 970-491-7604 Fax: 970-491-5326

E-mail: [nancy.weiss@colostate.edu](mailto:nancy.weiss@colostate.edu)

For information in spanish call:

Noa Román-Muñiz 970-297-4106

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**The Rocky Mountain Regional Center of Excellence Specialized Biodefense Training** Group VC 4III is a consortium of a number of regional universities working together to help keep our nation safe from biological threats. More information can be found at: [www.cvmbc.colostate.edu/miprmrce](http://www.cvmbc.colostate.edu/miprmrce)  
[www.cvmbc.colostate.edu/mip/rmrce/sbdtg/](http://www.cvmbc.colostate.edu/mip/rmrce/sbdtg/)

**Contact ; A. P. Knight**

**Colorado State University**

**College of Veterinary Medicine**

**and Biomedical Sciences**

Fort Collins, CO 80523-1601

[aknight@colostate.edu](mailto:aknight@colostate.edu)

970-297-4283

## **Human Disease Risks in the Maternity Area of Dairy Farms**

### **Dairy Management Program in Spanish**



**&**

### **The Rocky Mountain Regional Center of Excellence Specialized Biodefense Training**

The following are some animal diseases that can cause diseases in people working with cows in the calving or maternity area.

### **Brucellosis**

#### ***What does it do to cows?***

- Infects the uterus and causes abortions, usually after the 5th month of pregnancy

#### ***How is it transmitted to humans?***

- Direct contact with placental tissue or vaginal secretions
- Drinking raw (unpasteurized) milk

#### ***What are the symptoms in humans?***

- Intermittent fever, weakness, chills, headache weight loss and muscle pain
- Inflammation of the testicle in men
- Abortion in women
- Symptoms usually appear 1-2 months after infection, and can last for months

#### ***How can you prevent infection?***

- Vaccinate cows against Brucellosis
- Drink only pasteurized milk
- Wear protective clothing and gloves when assisting with calvings, handling placental tissue & dead fetus
- Dispose of placenta and aborted fetuses properly
- Keep work clothing and shoes separate from other clothing
- Wash your hands and arms after procedures



### **Salmonella**

#### ***What does it do to cows?***

- Diarrhea, fever, and death
- May cause abortion

### **Salmonella - continued**

#### ***How is it transmitted to humans?***

- Eating food and drinking water contaminated with feces of an infected cow
- Children and others, including pets in the household can be infected by clothing and shoes contaminated with feces

#### ***What are the symptoms in humans?***

- Fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain headache and nausea

#### ***How can you prevent infection?***

- Wash your hands after handling cows
- Keep work clothing and shoes separate from other clothing

### **Q Fever**

#### ***What does it do to cows?***

- May cause abortion

#### ***How is it transmitted to humans?***

- Contact with reproductive tract fluids while helping with calving
- Drinking raw (unpasteurized) milk
- Eating soft homemade cheese made with unpasteurized milk
- Direct contact with urine and feces of infected animals

#### ***What are the symptoms in humans?***

- Flu symptoms; muscle pain, headache & chills
- Can cause lung, heart & neurological problems

#### ***How can you prevent infection?***

- Drink only pasteurized milk
- Wear protective clothing and gloves when assisting with calvings, handling placental tissue & dead fetus
- Dispose of placenta and aborted fetuses properly
- Keep work clothing and shoes separate from other clothing
- Wash your hands and arms after procedures

### **Leptospirosis**

#### ***What does it do to the cows?***

- Decrease in milk production and abortion, most commonly in late pregnancy

#### ***How is it transmitted to humans?***

- Contact with infected urine: urine droplets penetrating eyes, mouth, nose and broken skin

#### ***What are the symptoms in humans?***

- Influenza-like symptoms, fever, headache, rash, conjunctivitis. May lead to liver, kidney and brain damage

#### ***How can you prevent infection?***

- Vaccinate cows against Leptospirosis
- Wear protective clothing and gloves when assisting with calvings, handling placental tissue & dead fetus
- Dispose of placenta and aborted fetuses properly
- Keep work clothing and shoes separate from other clothing
- Wash your hands and arms after procedures



### **Always remember to follow these steps to protect yourself and your family:**

- Wash your hands and arms with soap and water after working with animals and before you eat, drink or smoke.
- Wear protective clothing and shoes and remove them before going home.
- Visit your doctor when feeling ill and tell them you work with cattle, even if you do not think your illness is work related.
- Children, immunocompromised and the elderly are especially susceptible to animal diseases that you can bring home on your hands, clothes and shoes.