

Protocol Drift, how did we get here?

As I was going through a biosecurity questionnaire with a producer this week, we stumbled across the “veterinarian reviewed vaccination program” question...and found out we had slightly different versions of what that program was, or, more to the point, that it was not currently happening. It sparked a great conversation about how things had changed since the last time we had discussed vaccinations, and really came down to simply getting behind from the busy-ness of farm life, and not getting to the vaccine lists. We came up with a new plan going forward to make sure that the cows remain protected from the diseases of concern, but it did get me thinking about other protocols on farms that get implemented, but, from a variety of reasons, either change in the way they are managed, or just stop getting done.

Protocols exist everywhere on farm, from milking procedures to ketone testing, to reproduction programs. They are essential for creating success in all aspects of managing a farm. A good milking protocol helps with milk let-down, decreases incidence, and spread of mastitis, and enables the farm to ship the best quality of milk it can. Following a proper vaccination protocol is essential for the vaccine to be effective at preventing/minimizing the disease we are targeting. There are many different choices of vaccines for many different diseases of interest, so we need to ensure we are following the correct protocol for that particular product.

Creating protocols is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Even though it may be a very specific instruction on a particular product, or procedure, it needs to be adapted for each farm and situation. We know all too well, that if something doesn't fit with the way things are run on farm, it's not going to last too long, despite the best of intentions.

Now that the busyness of summer and fieldwork is slowly calming down, the fall can be a great time to look at re-establishing protocols that have gone adrift over the last few months. What protocols are going great? Are there any that aren't working? Is there a way to adjust the protocol to make it work better on your farm? Is there something new you have been thinking of adding to your farm protocols? Or a challenge you have been having on farm that we can help change?

Protocol drift is a natural occurrence in every aspect of life. Let us help you get things back on track and running the best farm you can!

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