Season 4, Episode 12: The Standardized Outbreak Investigation Program

Dr. Kate Dion, Postdoc Research Associate, Iowa State University and **Dr. Derald Holtkamp**, Professor of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, Iowa State University, discuss the Standardized Outbreak Investigation Program they both developed, how it will be used, why it is necessary, and much more.

Is Biosecurity Progressing?

Dr. Holtkamp discusses how adding showers, benches, entryways, and truck washes into farms is not necessarily progressing biosecurity when we look at the intended outcomes. In his opinion, biosecurity cannot be any worse than what it is now and that we need to be thinking about a different approach to be addressing biosecurity, which is what led into the development of these outbreak investigation programs.

Standardized Outbreak Investigations

In 2021, Swine Health Information Center (SHIC) funded many outbreak investigations designed for producers and veterinarians to respond more readily to biosecurity outbreaks. These investigations were all over the board, which is what gave Dr. Holtkamp the idea to create a standardized outbreak investigation program. The goal of standardizing the outbreak investigations was to establish a systematic approach to collect a consistent set of information every time an outbreak investigation is performed. Dr. Holtkamp explains that by implementing standardized investigations we can start to learn from our collective experiences of outbreak investigations and hopefully start to answer some questions based on biosecurity hazards, practices used most, and practices not used.

Web-Based Program

A web-based program was developed for individual companies to easily store and access information related to an outbreak. It allows companies to customize a form to fit their needs, input data outbreak investigation information, and create a database specific to them. This is valuable when analyzing what types of outbreaks are occurring, where they are occurring, and what type of operations they are occurring at. This web-based program will hopefully make us more efficient and effective when moving forward in the short and long term.

Using the Program

If you are wanting to use the web-based program, you can sign up for it ahead of time by emailing soip@iastate.edu and they will set you up with a username and password where you can add users within your company and add farms. If you decide that you want to do an outbreak investigation, it is best to have it at the farm and include farm manager and herd veterinarian. Filling out the pre-investigation information focuses on dates such as semen arrival, selling of weaned pigs, etc. It is best if you can print the information that was entered so when you are ready to perform the outbreak investigation, you can focus on the details surrounding the entry events and when they occurred by looking at the truck wash or talking to staff, for example. A detailed summary report and an executive summary report are also available through this program.

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