



POLICY PAPER

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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Biosecurity

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INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

Biosecurity at the farm level can be defined as the management practices enabling producers to prevent the movement of disease-causing agents onto and off of agricultural operations. It has become a major concern to the agricultural industry as a result of foreign and emerging disease issues, the globalization of agriculture and the increasing public concerns over food safety. A good biosecurity plan acts as a preventative insurance policy and as such shall be adhered to by the farmer and by visitors to the operation.

Biosecurity is an essential component of many on-farm food safety programs thus leading to greater consumer acceptance of the quality and safety of the food supply. It leads to healthy animals that are more productive as well as improved animal care & well-being. It satisfies the basic need to provide a stable, safe and affordable food supply while creating improved efficiency and profitability for the farmer.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

All visitors, whether it is government inspectors, neighbors or the service industry, need to understand the potential risk they present when entering a farm, what is expected of them and necessary precautions to take.

The list of visitors includes:

- Regulatory personnel/inspectors,
- Agribusiness & service industry representatives,
- Neighbors & friends,
- Farm tours,
- Veterinarians,
- Deadstock collectors, and
- Custom applicators.

Visitors can unknowingly and unintentionally bring harmful agents onto a farm via contaminated clothing and footwear or on equipment and vehicles. All visitors, farm operators and employees have a shared responsibility in biosecurity.

FARM OPERATOR

Risk assessment is a method of determining the likelihood and severity of the risk posed by a visitor. As a farm operator, you should identify your risk factors, appropriate procedures and then develop your biosecurity protocols accordingly. It is also important to monitor the procedures and keep effective records. You must also ensure that whoever is in charge while you are away are fully aware of the farm's protocol and follows it very carefully.

Following is a list of items for consideration in your protocol:

- Erect a sign on the entrance to your farm indicating that biosecurity is in effect.
- Use restricted entry signs on doors to animal facilities and storage sheds.
- Designate a visitors' parking area away from farm vehicles and facilities.
- Establish one entry point to the farm for visitors. All other entry points can indicate "no admittance".
- Keep and update as required a visitor log book, which consists of the name, date, time, vehicle, business nature of all visitors.
- Require a minimum of 48 hours notice for visitors to the farm. You may also require a list of where that visitor will be before arriving at your farm.
- If it is necessary for a person to person visit, restrict access to areas where animal facilities are located.
- Insist on clean clothing and/or supply such. An appropriate measure may be disposable overalls and boot covers. Also, supply a plastic bag for those items being used by the visitor.
- Do not allow foods of animal origin to be brought onto the premises.
- Provide a footbath and a container of an appropriate disinfectant solution with a scrub brush at the entrance to each facility.
- Ensure that equipment used by visitors is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Please contact your provincial commodity group for more details on a template, development and implementation of a Biosecurity protocol for your farming operation.

VISITORS

It is extremely important that visitors to a farm, whether it is government inspectors/regulators or service representatives, follow proper procedures as it relates to biosecurity measures that a farm operator may have in place.

Following is a list of some of the guidelines that visitors should follow:

- Before deciding to visit a farm, please assess the level of risk involved and whether or not the visit is completely necessary.

- Contact the farmer at least 48 hours prior and plan the visit, asking about the biosecurity protocols that are in place for that particular operation.
- Obey any no entry signs located on or near the farm.
- Park at a farm's designated parking area for visitors. Check in with the farm personnel upon entering the premises.
- Avoid carrying mud or plant debris on your vehicle.
- When at the farm, avoid unnecessary contact with livestock.
- Clean exposed skin with antibacterial soap before and after coming into contact with livestock.
- Wear clean clothes and if possible, disposable coveralls and plastic boots.
- Create a biosecurity kit for your own vehicle which includes: disposal overalls, booties, gloves, disinfectants, paper towels, disposal bags, etc.
- Keep a record of your visit, including date, time and purpose.

There are some circumstances where veterinarians are pre-authorized to visit whenever necessary and are exempt since protocols should already be in place. There is also a legal right of entry of animal protection officers at any time under the *Animal Care Act (section 8(1))* when such an officer believes on reasonable grounds that there is a companion animal in distress or a commercial animal.

SUMAMRY

A safe, secure and affordable food supply is the foundation of any society and should be protected from both accidental and intentional harm. An increased awareness of crop and livestock biosecurity will help in both the short and long term. Farmers have a role to play but visitors to the farm have a major role as well and that is following the biosecurity protocols that are in place.