

Recommended Biosecurity Practices for Farmers Hosting Tours from Other Countries

As a general biosecurity recommendation, farms should only admit visitors that are essential to the farming operation. People can spread pests and disease on footwear, hands, hair and clothing. Viruses can live in nasal passages. The concern is even greater with foreign visitors as they could introduce a new strain of pest or disease from their country or a known foreign animal disease, e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease is endemic in many parts of the World.

The following practices are recommended for hosts of farm visits by non-Canadian residents or visitors returning to Canada from other countries.

- Prior to the visit, ask the tour organizer for a list of participants, the last country visited, and their country of residence with full contact information. Establish if, when and what types of farms have been visited by participants prior to your farm visit either in Canada or prior to coming to Canada.
- Conduct your own research regarding recent health advisories for countries where your visitors are coming from and countries where diseases are endemic. Listed below are two reference sites.

International Society for Infectious Diseases (includes plant, animal and human health alerts)

<http://healthmap.org/promed/>

World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID)

http://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Countryinformation/Countryreports

- **Low-risk visitors** come from urban areas and have not had contact with livestock.
- **Moderate-risk visitors** are those that have been on another farm recently but have not had direct contact with livestock.
- **High-risk visitors** are those that have been on another farm recently and have had direct contact with livestock or poultry either at a farm, live animal market, fair, or other venue.



- Based on your inquiries noted above and in consultation with your veterinarian, determine a safe downtime period before allowing the visitors onto your farm that is appropriate to risk.
- Ensure visitors are aware of your farm's biosecurity protocols and ask the tour host to provide translation services when necessary.
- Inquire whether visitors have any signs of personal illness, (e.g. headache, fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, etc.). Recommend that anyone who is not feeling well, not participate in the tour.

- Ensure laneways and roadways used by visitors' vehicles are kept free of manure and soil.

- Set aside a specific parking area for visitors and post signage to clearly indicate that is where vehicles should be parked. Ensure the area is well-drained, gravelled, free of manure, and a minimum of 15 feet from the barn. Do not park vehicles under exhaust fans or intakes.
- Visitors' vehicles should be visibly clean of manure and organic matter.
- Keep a visitor log book to record visitors' names, date of visit, last country visited and country of residence.
- Do not allow foods of animal origin to be brought onto the premises.
- Provide boots and coveralls for visitors at each barn. If you don't have boots for visitors, supply plastic covers. If you don't have visitor coveralls, insist on clean clothing that has not been worn on another farm since being laundered.
- Clean footbaths and a scrub brush at the entry to the barn will *help* reduce pathogens but are difficult to maintain and use effectively. Disinfectant must be formulated according to manufacturers' specifications and changed regularly. Boots must be scrubbed free of manure or other organic material before stepping into the footbath. Usually at least five minutes contact time is required for boots to be adequately disinfected.
- Keep visitors out of animal pens and feed alleys and do not allow direct contact with animals.
- Provide hand washing facilities or a bottle of hand sanitizer for visitors and insist they use it upon entry and exit from facility.
- Provide a container or plastic bag immediately outside the facility or in the anteroom for collecting dirty clothing or disposable items used by visitors. This will ensure visitors do not carry waste material off the farm with them.

TIP When using a hand sanitizer, be sure to use enough to cover all surfaces of your hands, including between your fingers, and rub your hands until they are dry. The alcohol content of the sanitizer must be at least 60% to be effective. Check the expiration date.

Sources:

1. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Biosecurity Considerations for Ag Tourism Ventures, Agriculture Business Strategies, Agdex 888-7, October 2005.
2. Bowman, Gary L., Shulaw, William PI, Biosecurity Fundamentals for Extension Personnel, Ohio State University Extension Factsheet, VME-5-2001, June 2001.
3. Bowman, Gary L., Shulaw, William PI, On-Farm Biosecurity: Traffic Control and Sanitation, Ohio State University Extension Factsheet, VME-6-2001, June 2001.
4. Canadian Food Inspection Agency, <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/information-for-consumers/travellers/visitor-to-canada/eng/1389644337592/1389644527136>
5. Dalrymple, Jim, Innes, Dr. Paul, Biosecurity Fundamentals for Visitors to Livestock Facilities, OMAFRA Factsheet 04-003, February 2004.
6. Foreign Visitor Guidelines, <http://biosecurity.swinehealth.ca>, September 2011.
7. Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council, Livestock On-Farm Biosecurity Information Guide, July 2012.