



BEEF BIOSECURITY: KEEP IT SIMPLE

Halt disease at the farm gate

Few places in this world are more hospitable than Canada's beef operations. Each season beef farmers and ranchers welcome visitors to see their industry first hand. Feedlots work hard to share their knowledge with industry groups, often with an initiation to visit personally.

The bottom line is that what's good for industry relations isn't always so good for disease control. With every busload of industry visitors, every carload of customers, friends, relatives and international travellers, comes the threat of disease spread.

At an industry level that translates into a renewed interest in beef biosecurity. In fact some people think biosecurity is actually a government program but it's not.

At a farm level, this boils down to simple, straightforward strategies to protect herd

health status and prevent disease from gaining a foothold. Much of this is grounded in common sense.

UNDERSTAND RISK

A key is to be able to identify the highest risk visitors to the farm or feedlot. Low risk visitors include urban dwellers who have no livestock contact. Medium risk visitors would include people who may visit farms regularly but have no contact with livestock.

High risk visitors include anyone with regular contact with livestock, such as veterinarians, livestock haulers, and those coming from abroad.

QUESTION VISITORS AHEAD OF TIME

Don't hesitate to ask visitors if they are from or have been outside Canada and the U.S. in the previous two weeks.

Ask if they have been on a farm or ranch or been exposed to livestock from outside North America in the past two weeks

Ask if they have been exposed to a situation which involves a reportable animal health problem in the past six months.

If they answer yes to any of the above, contact your vet.

Keep basic cleaning tools handy, such as a scrub brush, tub and bleach or disinfectant. Have visitors leave their name and contact information in a

visitors' log. Consider providing a pair of boots to wear upon arrival.

WHEN YOU TRAVEL

If you travel yourself, take precautions before you visit other countries and when returning.

Shower before you return, and scrub and disinfect footwear. Upon returning wash all clothes and dry on high heat. Don't travel with footwear normally used around the farm.

Send outdoor wear to the dry cleaner. And wipe personal items such as rings, watches, glasses, cameras, smartphones and suitcase exteriors with a solution of vinegar or bleach.

Keep away from livestock including your own for 24 to 72 hours after you return.

VBP CAN HELP

VBP has components that can assist on-farm biosecurity efforts. That includes animal health treatment/vaccination records, and a record of animals sold, purchased or died.

Vaccination programs are important. Cow/calf producers should be thinking carefully about herd health status when sourcing replacements.

MORE INFORMATION

Canada now has a biosecurity standard for beef cattle, and the industry will be developing specific information to apply on-farm. Don't hesitate to ask for the latest. It's a small investment with potentially big returns.



Keep disinfectant available, and note some products kill viruses whereas not all will.