

# Visiting the backcountry with care....



## Rancher's Care... You're a BIG Part of it too!

Farmers are stewards of the land, water and all the animals in it. By putting in place management steps (also known as biosecurity practices), they prevent the introduction of disease, pests and weeds. Farmers know it is always better to be proactive than fighting these problems after they've arrived, but they need your help.

### What's the Issue?

A 650 kg cow may look tough but can very easily be "taken down" by only a few unseen bacteria, viruses or parasites. Adverse effects of these organisms include decreased pregnancy rates, abortion, weak calves, reduced weight gain, increased sickness or even death.

The introduction of invasive weeds or pests can quickly force out native plants and destroy natural habitat for other wildlife and livestock. Some diseases are even required to be reported to the federal government, because they can have negative impacts on exports of Canadian products.

Biosecurity practices require everyone's help to be truly effective. Without taking any preventative steps yourself, you can innocently and unknowingly introduce invasive pests, weeds and even infectious diseases whenever you visit these areas.



# What can you do to help?

Opportunistic organisms can ride in on a variety of things: soil, pets, footwear, clothing, imported meat, equipment, animal feed or body fluids (from animal urine and manure to human sewage and nasal excretions).

## How you can help:

- Before leaving (home and the back country area visiting), inspect and remove dirt, manure, plant materials (e.g. burrs), and bugs from:
  - Clothing, boots, and pets.
  - All equipment, such as backpacks, hiking poles, tack, horse trailers and/or recreational vehicles (RVs, ATVs, bikes). Consider a quick spray wash or taking your vehicles through a car wash.
  - If you've recently arrived from international travel in rural areas take extra precautions, including changing clothing/footwear and cleaning or disinfecting equipment (e.g. backpacks, cameras/cell phones) before entering into the area.
- Don't bring or remove firewood - invasive insects

like gypsy moth can hide in it. Get your firewood from where you intend to burn it.

- When riding, packing or camping with horses consider buying hay local to the area and clean up any leftover hay.
- Prevent direct contact between your animals and others in the area (e.g. nose-to-nose). If possible don't share equipment like water buckets and troughs.
- Stay on designated trails wherever possible to avoid disrupting the soil, as this may encourage invasive species to take hold.
- Watch for biosecurity signage (as in the picture above) and respect them. These signs may only pertain to a limited area but are vital because:
  - There may be new livestock to the area that are especially vulnerable to outside disease risks, or there may be livestock receiving treatment for a disease that you could spread to another area.
  - There may be no pesticides or vaccinations used in the area, which could mean it is especially vulnerable to any pests or disease you carry in.

**Together we can help BC's livestock and the environment remain sustainable, healthy and productive.**

**Your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you!**

