

**Preparing for a Farm Visit - Biosecurity Protocol**  
**Developed by the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Forestry**  
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**Biosecurity Defined**

Biosecurity may be defined as securing the biological health of species of concern from potential harm caused by biological, chemical, physical or radiological health hazards.

**Concern of the Industry**

Biosecurity is a major concern to the agriculture industry for a number of reasons. Issues such as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED), Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), foot and mouth disease, avian influenza, bacterial ring rot (BRR), and potato wart have brought world concerns to our doorsteps. Agriculture has become globalized and individual farms are far less isolated. Plant, animal, human and vehicular movement between farms is frequent. While an operation can exercise some control over this, the ability to control a foreign disease may still be compromised.

**Risk including Probability and Impact**

Risk is a combination of the probability (likelihood) and impact (consequences) of something going wrong. While the likelihood of spreading disease is often low, the consequences of an outbreak can be huge, making the risk unacceptably high. The presence or suspected presence of disease can carry severe ramifications for not only the affected operation, but the entire industry. The discovery of BSE in western Canada and Potato Wart here in P.E.I. illustrate the economic, social, and environmental impacts of a small outbreak of disease. The cost to eradicate, the loss of markets and their effects on the local economy can take a long time to recover.

Primary responsibility for biosecurity lies with the farm operation itself. It is up to management to ensure that they and their staff are aware of the possibilities and have taken steps to mitigate the risks. A small investment in time and money can yield big benefits for the farmer, the industry, and the consumer through improved food quality, safety, and image. With the diversity of Prince Edward Island's agricultural community, it is important that all operations including livestock, crop, field and farmyard are included in biosecurity protocols.

As the potential consequences to industry are extremely high, it is critical when you are visiting any operation, both farming and non-farming, to follow biosecurity procedures. You must be aware of the concerns, pests, and diseases related to a farm operation and ways to mitigate their spread. Once again, a small investment in time can go a long way.

## **Purpose**

The intent of this protocol is to minimize the potential introduction or transmission of biological hazards to, within and between agricultural operations by visiting individuals. It will apply to all situations that involve visiting and/or entering a premise, farmyard or field. This protocol will also apply when there is a possibility of coming in contact with contaminated material, livestock, or plants including deadstock collection, or salesbarns. Where an individual visits an agricultural related business (feedmill, supply and service operations etc.) and there is a possibility of contamination due to farm traffic, the protocol should be followed when next visiting a farm operation.

## **Specific Scope**

The measures provided in this protocol are designed to minimize the probability of transferring hazards between operations under normal conditions and provide a minimum standard for visiting individuals. Additional requirements may be requested by the owner / operator (i.e. swine operations). In these instances, the additional requirements must be met and the necessary supplies and facilities provided by the owner / operator.

In the event that the federal or provincial government or a public health authority imposes additional requirements during an outbreak of a reportable or quarantinable disease or pest, these additional requirements will apply. Visitors will observe all signage by other authorities that restrict admittance to a premises.

## **General Biosecurity Principles for Visiting a Farm Operation**

For the purposes of this protocol, visiting means in attendance on the agricultural operation, including compounds, laneways, farmyards, all outbuildings and structures, rooms, pens, walkways, fields, pastures, watercourse, ditches or drains immediately adjacent to the operation, or any areas or on any equipment which may contain or be susceptible to contamination by biological hazards that could cause harm to agricultural plants or animals.

Where possible, call ahead to schedule your visit. This allows you to confirm whether there may be any quarantines or additional biosecurity measures in place, or concerns about particular hazards prior to your arrival. This also allows you to plan your visits from those of least risk to those with the most risk.

## ***When arriving on-site:***

- Drive slowly upon entering the premises and close all windows to avoid unnecessary contamination of the vehicle from splashes or dust.

- Park vehicles in an appropriate area away from sources of contamination. An appropriate area is one that:
  - Is not adjacent to livestock housing facilities and animal traffic areas.
  - Is not underneath ventilation exhausts and inlets.
  - Has no visible contamination (slurry, manure, drainage water, soil, plants).
  - Does not interfere with business operation.
- If the owner / operator is present, determine if there is a local biosecurity protocol that needs to be followed. If the owner / operator is not present, confirm, document and respect any signs, posted protocol, and or barriers at the facility.
- Wear boots that are clean of any visible contamination or wear disposable boot covers.
- Disinfect wheel wells on vehicles with an approved disinfectant prior to entering or moving around the premises. Wheel wells should be washed prior to arrival if necessary.
- Disinfect boots with an approved disinfectant prior to entering or moving around the premises. Boots should be washed first if necessary.
- Disinfect hands with a waterless hand cleanser.
- Wash and disinfect any equipment that will be used on plants or livestock during your visit.
- Sign a visitor log book if one is present.

***During the visit:***

- If driving to another site on the operation, if possible accompany the owner / operator in his / her vehicle, so long as the situation does not endanger you.
- If requested by the owner / operator as part of a local biosecurity protocol, wear protective footwear, clothing or other equipment supplied by the owner / operator as part of the operation's local biosecurity protocols. Any clothing, footwear or equipment that is needed to meet the requirements of the local protocols must be supplied by the owner / operator.

- Wash and disinfect any equipment that will be used on plants or livestock between use on biologically separate and unique areas or buildings within the premises.
- When visiting a livestock operation, enter livestock areas only as necessary. Avoid walking on feeding surfaces as well as in or around feed storage areas. Try to stay on alleyways and sidewalks when possible.
- As much as possible, avoid direct contact with animals. When contact is required, move from youngest to oldest and from healthiest to sickest. Contact with sick animals should only be made when that is the point of the visit.
- When contact with animals is necessary, clean, protective, washable clothing should be worn.
- For crop fields, try to schedule visits to avoid walking in fields or handling plants when they are wet.

***When leaving the operation:***

- Clothing, hair and equipment should be visually inspected when leaving a premises or field to ensure that no manure, soil, insects or plant material have adhered to them.
- Leave disposable materials with the owner / operator if possible. Otherwise place the materials in a sealed plastic bag or washable container in the vehicle for later disposal. Place contaminated reusable materials such as coveralls, in a sealed plastic bag or washable container in the vehicle, separate from clean materials.
- Boots must be cleaned of visible contamination and disinfected by washing all surfaces with a brush and pail of disinfectant solution (spray solution may be suitable as well depending on circumstances). Any broad spectrum bactericide / viricidal disinfectant is appropriate. Alternatively, a detergent that is stable in cold and hard water conditions is also acceptable (e.g. Cold water laundry detergent); however, in situations of a disease outbreak an appropriate disinfectant may be required. If boots cannot be washed on-site, they should be stored separately from clean materials and washed before conducting another farm visit.
- Wash and disinfect hands with a waterless hand cleanser.

- Wash and disinfect any equipment that was used on plants or livestock.
- Wheel wells must be cleaned of visible contamination and disinfected with an approved disinfectant prior to leaving the premises.
- In situations of heightened biosecurity, document the biosecurity precautions that were taken on the visit.