

Biosecurity on Your Farm

Biosecurity on the farm is a topic I have heard a lot lately between meetings and trainings. There's no better time than cold and flu season to remind anyone who has livestock about the importance of having biosecurity protocols in place. In any size livestock operation, biosecurity refers to those measures taken to keep disease agents out of populations, herds, or groups of animals where they do not already exist. Biosecurity measures can be categorized as either external measures—those measures taken to prevent the entry of new diseases into a herd or production group, or internal measures—those measures taken to prevent the spread of a disease already in the herd to other uninfected groups or subpopulations within the herd.

A general guideline for external measures is to isolate new or returning animals before allowing them to have contact with your herd. Species-specific requirements may vary, but a 2-week minimum is recommended and an entire month is preferred. Everyone has different facility capabilities, but, if possible, the isolation facility should be at least several hundred yards from the rest of the herd. This is important as contamination can also be carried by the wind. If complete isolation is impossible, use a separate pen or pasture that does not allow nose-to-nose contact or sharing of feed and water supplies. During this isolation period, be sure to monitor the new or returning animals for any signs of illness. If required, you can test animals for any specifics before the isolation period ends. Preventative treatments such as deworming and vaccinations can be given in preparation for moving to the herd. When handling animals in isolation, be sure to wear clothes that you only wear to check on these animals or wear protective coverings anytime you visit. Be cautious of any equipment such as buckets, shovels, halters, or any other equipment you use that has contact with the animals in isolation. Always sanitize equipment before it is used on the rest of the herd.

A commonly overlooked measure of external biosecurity is when we visit other farms or have visitors at our farms. The disease is more commonly spread through introduction of new animals on your farm, but people can also help spread disease on farms. Swine and poultry herds should be especially cautious of visitors as African Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, and Swine Influenza are major biosecurity concerns. People can be broken into low, moderate, or high-risk visitors depending on the level of contact they have with other livestock. High-risk visitors are those who come into direct contact with livestock such as veterinarians, livestock haulers, processing crews, and fellow livestock owners. The disease can be transmitted when visitors have manure on their tires and wheel walls and then park next to their livestock areas. Visitors can also carry the disease on their clothing, boots, and equipment. For those high-risk species, it is important to have sanitation protocols when having high-risk visitors to your farm. Disposable boot covers are an easy way to implement bare minimum biosecurity protocols with any visitors to your animal areas. Other methods of external biosecurity include trying to control wildlife and pests to prevent contact with your animals. It is a good practice to require anyone to wash their hands before entering your animal areas. You should clean and disinfect your truck and trailer, or any type of crate in between each animal.

With internal biosecurity, it is important to establish a traffic pattern for both people and animals. This pattern should eliminate exposure of younger to older animals. If you have animals in a quarantine area, be sure they have no nose-to-nose contact with any of your non-infected herd. Just like animals in isolation moving to your farm, be cautious of any handling of equipment as well as your clothing. Never come into contact with healthy animals without changing your clothes, washing your hands, and disinfecting all

equipment. It is best to go from the healthy herd to the animals in quarantine to eliminate the chance of exposure. Think about separating animals based on age or susceptibility to getting sick. Be cautious when entering different animal areas. When working on a biosecurity plan for your farm, it is important to establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship. It helps to have a veterinarian familiar with your herd and practices to provide any advice in the event of a health concern. If you have any questions about starting a biosecurity plan on your farm, feel free to reach out to the local extension office.

Upcoming Events & Reminders

Thursday, November 16th- Come out to the Ohio Valley Career & Technical Center from 4:00-6:00 pm for a Chicken and noodle Dinner. All proceeds will benefit the Adams County Junior Fair Small Animal and Horse Programs. This will be drive-thru style. The cost is \$10.

2023 Beginner & Small Farm College for Adams, Brown, Highland, and Clermont Counties is a college designed to help landowners examine ways to increase profits on their small acreage properties. This is open to all new or aspiring farmers, rural landowners, and farm families looking for new ideas. Registration is limited to the first 50 participants. The cost to register is \$100 for the first person and \$75 for each additional person. These series of courses will be from 6:00-9:00 pm on November 30th, December 7th, December 14th, and December 21st. This is a great opportunity to develop realistic expectations for your farm. For further information, please contact your local extension office. Adams County can be reached at 937-544-2339 or stoneking.24@osu.edu