



Bio-security cuts risk of getting diseases from visitor

A visitor unknowingly carrying disease-causing agents on their clothing or equipment could make them the most memorable guest you have ever had.

Agents that cause diseases like salmonellosis, transmissible gastroenteritis (TGE) – and the scariest of all – foot-and-mouth disease -- can be carried on clothing, footwear and equipment. Meat and dairy products can also harbour infectious agents for diseases such as foot and mouth disease or classical swine fever and have been implicated as the source of many disease outbreaks. It is illegal to import these products from other countries without CFIA approval because of the risk to livestock.

Keeping that in mind, a few extra bio-security checks on visitors and machinery is just good business. Do it for every visitor; it's not much work for such a huge payoff.

"By adopting best practices in bio-security, everyone involved, including producers, processors, veterinarians and the public can help protect Alberta's livestock from disease and from the enormous financial and production losses that can accompany a disease outbreak," says Dr. Gerald Hauer, Assistant Chief Provincial Veterinarian.

Visitors who travel from farm to farm and work with livestock or manure pose the biggest threat of carrying disease-causing organisms onto your farm. Other visitors, who travel from farm to farm but who do not work directly with livestock or manure, are ranked as moderate risks.

To keep your farm safe, here is a list of some bio-security procedures to follow with your visitors:

- Ensure all visitors comply with industry standard bio-security procedures appropriate to your operation type
- Reduce the exposure of your livestock to visitors and educate all visitors about your bio-security plan.
- Post signs indicating which areas of the farm are off limits for visitors.
- Make sure a visitor arriving from another country has taken the necessary precautions against transmitting disease agents. Remember that just because a country is not reporting serious livestock problems does not mean none

exist. Disease can escape detection for several weeks or months even in countries with good veterinary infrastructure.

- Provide clean outerwear (coveralls) and boots. Plastic disposable booties are suitable for shorter visits but are slippery and subject to tears.
- Install locks and doorbells at all entries and exits to a barn housing indoor livestock and entry should be by permission only.
- Do not allow visitors to bring meat and dairy products onto your farm from outside the country. Certain diseases such as foot and mouth disease can be carried in these products.
- Keep a visitor's log. If a disease outbreak occurs, your log might help trace the problem.
- Wash and change your clothes and boots after visiting other livestock operations or auction marts.
- Ensure that your staff and family members understand and follow your farm's bio-security protocols.