

Developing a Biosecurity Plan
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It's hard to imagine in this day and age we need to be ever so aware of all that can complicate our lives and livelihoods. Disease transmission is one. Consumer awareness and agriculture economics is forcing us to look closely at what we do to prevent and treat disease in our livestock which will eventually become a marketable product with economic impacts. We need to be prepared in ways we never thought necessary, specifically in the prevention of disease on our individual farms. This preparedness is called 'On Farm Biosecurity'. This is not intended to cause worry or panic, but awareness to what your plan is if natural disaster strikes or an animal disease outbreak occurs.

In 2014-2015 the poultry industry was the most recent of livestock industries to experience a devastating disease outbreak that was partly caused by a break in or lack of – BIOSECURITY protocol. This incident cost the industry and government billions.

Biosecurity is a system of practices that are implemented to reduce the risk of introducing a disease to animals and prevent the spread of disease to other livestock on a farm and surrounding farms. Exporting or importing animals from one country to another there are specific regulations and quarantine programs followed in order to protect the animal agriculture of that country, just as it is important to protect the animals on individual farms/ranches. Many producers think this is not necessary and it will never happen to them, but it can!

Developing a biosecurity plan for your farm is not all that difficult. Biosecurity plans are commonly followed whenever you take animals to the fair, a show, or to the veterinarian. There are simple signs instructing you not to unload animals until you have checked in and a veterinarian or technician is with you. Every time you load an animal in a chute, or place your pet on the counter, that area is cleaned with a disinfectant →biosecurity.

Important points to consider in the development of a plan is to ask yourself "what are the biosecurity risks on your farm?". Some recommend a separate plan for disease outbreak, traveling to shows, on farm visitors, herd health care, manure management, dead animal disposal. These are the primary points that should be considered when designing a plan for your farm and can easily be included in one plan. The following will serve as a template to get started in the development of such a plan.

Creating your farm's Biosecurity Plan:

1. Risk assessment of your farm
 - a. Identify and prioritize potential problems:
 - i. Who or what enters and leaves the farm,

- ii. What diseases pose a risk (CL, CAE, OPP, Johnes, Internal Parasites, etc..)
 - b. Cost
 - i. How much does a disease outbreak cost you
 - ii. How much does a plan cost? (signs, documentation, etc...)
 - c. Evaluate facilities
 - i. Quarantine area
 - ii. Clean / Dirty
 - iii. Equipment
 - d. Evaluate your animals
 - i. Closed herd
 - ii. New purchases from multiple sources
 - iii. Co-grazing
 - e. Evaluate your management
 - i. Visitor restrictions
 - ii. New arrival quarantine
 - iii. Herd Health management
 - 1. Kidding
 - 2. Veterinary care
 - 3. Sick Animal pens
 - 4. Pasture management
 - iv. Dead animal disposal
- 2. Set goals and prioritize
 - a. What is important to you
 - i. Saving and making money
 - ii. Labor
- 3. Prepare a written document(s) for:
 - a. Disease outbreak and treatment
 - b. Everyday procedures
 - c. Visitors
 - d. Dead animal disposal
- 4. Communicate
 - a. Signage
 - b. Farm worker expectations
 - c. Consequences
- 5. Implement the plan
 - a. Will you do this?

References:

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Maryland Small Ruminant Program www.sheepandgoat.com