



Biosecurity: increasing production and protecting your investment



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Good animal health is an essential requirement for maximizing livestock productivity and minimizing input costs. It is easy to see that tending to animal health is critical for protecting the financial investment in your livestock. Animal health starts on the farm with biosecurity. But what does biosecurity really mean and how do you apply it on your farm?

Biosecurity is how you separate your animals from anyone or anything that could carry disease. Consider these questions: Who is allowed access into your poultry barn? Can you recall who visited in the last week and month? Do you borrow machinery from your neighbour to work in your corrals? Do you bring new heifers into your herd without knowledge of their disease status? Do wild birds or farm cats get into your barns? Any of these could introduce infectious animal diseases, placing your livestock investment at risk.

Biosecurity is about being aware of how disease can spread and taking steps to block that spread. What bacteria and viruses do you carry on

your boots or clothes when you drop by the post office or the grocery store? What do you pick up when you wander through a sales yard?

Biosecurity is about protection. All aspects of your farming operation, including livestock handling, identification, disinfection protocols, movement control as well as disease recognition and reporting, contribute to keeping your livestock safe.



Biosecurity practices help protect livestock health.
Photo courtesy of Scott Bauer.

Any facility where people and animals are mixed has the potential to spread disease. While farmers have the ultimate responsibility to keep disease off their farm, auction markets, show grounds, veterinary clinics and boarding or training stables must also consider biosecurity.

The full scope of biosecurity is indeed expansive and specific details can differ between livestock sectors. It is always important that you keep biosecurity in mind and do your part to protect your herd or flock, and by doing so, your investment and industry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Kathryn Ross, Animal Health Program Officer at (306) 787-5142; or
- E-mail kathryn.ross@gov.sk.ca.

Disaster Assistance for Producers

The federal and provincial governments are providing over \$250 million to support Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers affected by excess moisture.

Forage and Livestock Programs

The **Saskatchewan Feed and Forage Program** will help livestock producers affected by excess moisture purchase additional winter feed and reseed damaged forage acres. There is also a program to help intensive livestock operations repair and upgrade pens and manure storage systems damaged by excess moisture. Application forms and more information can be accessed through the Ministry of Agriculture's regional offices, RM offices and Crop Insurance offices, www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca, or by calling 1-877-874-5365.

Provincial Disaster Assistance Program

The **Provincial Disaster Assistance Program** will provide assistance to agriculture producers for several flood related items including feed and livestock transportation, pasture rental and spoiled stored grain or feed. For more information, producers can also call 1-866-632-4033.




