



On-Farm Biosecurity

Beneficial Categories



Background

Maintaining biosecurity on your farm or ranch is essential to keep disease from entering the farm or further spreading and is critical for cattle health and productivity. The Government of Canada has a [Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard](#) that producers should be familiar with. The key principles of the standard are to:

- Manage and minimize cattle movement risks, specifically those from commingling, high-risk and highly susceptible animals
- Manage the movement of people, vehicles, equipment and tools
- Manage cattle health practices
- Educate, plan and record

Biosecurity plays an important role for sustainable livestock production. Adopting biosecurity on your operation can:

- Prevent the introduction and spread of disease
- Prevent the transmission of zoonotic disease
- Reduce disease treatment and the associated costs
- Demonstrate commitment to animal health and food safety

To begin, you can complete the [Government of Canada checklist](#) to assess where your operation is currently at and what changes are necessary.

Development and Adoption of a Biosecurity Plan

The Government of Canada has created templates to assist with establishing biosecurity plans specific to your operation. A biosecurity plan is a critical component for disease prevention strategies on farm. There are three general areas to focus on when developing a biosecurity plan:

- Access management
- Animal health management
- Operational management

Access management

Designate distinct zones

- Establish zones based on the required level of protection and define these zones with fences or other features
- Zones should be identified with signs
- Control movements in and between designated zones

Animal health management

Manage animal movements

- Permanently identify all animals and keep records for traceability
- Test and isolate new animals before introducing them to the herd
- Observe animals for signs of disease

Establish a response plan for potential disease situations

- Contact and work with your veterinarian if you have concerns or see signs of unusual rates of disease or death in the herd

Operational management

Properly dispose of deadstock according to local regulations

- More information on the disposal of deadstock can be found on the [Euthanasia and Animal Disposal information page](#)

Manure management according to regulations

- More information on manure management can be found on the [Manure Management information page](#)

Maintain facilities

- Proper maintenance ensures your biosecurity plan can be effectively implemented
- Good maintenance includes buildings, fences, feed storage areas and alleyways

Plan and train all personnel who have regular access to the operation

- Have a written biosecurity plan that is updated regularly and as needed, and ensure training is provided to those who require it

For more ideas on developing a biosecurity plan, the Beef Quality Assurance program has developed a field guide with a checklist that can be found on page 8 of [this document](#).

Potential Economic Costs/Benefits

Costs associated with the time and increased management required to adopt biosecurity practices are difficult to measure and will vary across each operation based on location, herd size, land size and current (if any) measures in place.

Direct benefits of adopting on-farm biosecurity may not show for some time. The main benefit is reduced incidence of disease outbreak in the herd. If the biosecurity practices are working, reduced or eliminated instance of disease is only realized over an extended period of time. The cost and benefit balance will vary across individual operations, but good record keeping can help in making informed decisions on the best biosecurity practices to adopt. Overall, improved biosecurity that results in decreased incidence of disease outbreak on farms and ranches is good for an individual operation's production and the health of the national cattle herd as well.

Financial Incentives

Some provincial/territorial livestock traceability programs provide partial funding to eligible applicants for a tag reader rebate program to support livestock traceability. The [Canadian Cattle Identification Agency](#) lists rebate programs in each province.

For more information on establishing biosecurity practices, visit the following sites:

[Verified Beef Production Plus – Biosecurity](#)

[Government of Canada – Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard: Summary](#)

[Government of Canada – Assess the Risks on your Farm: Biosecurity Checklist](#)

[Government of Canada – Basic Principles of Biosecurity](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Managing the Movements of People, Vehicles, Equipment and Tools](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Educate, Plan and Record](#)

[Government of Manitoba – Biosecurity in Livestock Production](#)

[Government of Ontario – Biosecurity Fundamentals for Visitors to Livestock Facilities](#)

[Beef Quality Assurance – Field Guide](#)