



# Biosecurity ---Why it's Important to the Sheep Industry In **SASKATCHEWAN**



## **What is Biosecurity?**

1. Farm-level biosecurity is about a series of management practices designed to minimize, prevent or control:
  - a. The introduction of infectious pathogens onto a farm;
  - b. Spread within a farm production operation;
  - c. Export of these pathogens beyond the farm, which may have an adverse effect on the economy, the environment and human health.
2. Common sense
3. Good management practice
4. A way to reduce costs/increase margins

## **Biosecurity is not ...**

1. A sterile environment
2. It is not the eradication of all disease

## **Why is Biosecurity Important?**

1. Biosecurity reduces the risk of endemic, economically-significant, production-limiting diseases.
2. Biosecurity practices also reduce the risk of transmission of **foreign animal diseases** (FAD) and newly-**emerging diseases**.
3. Biosecurity practices are also important in reducing the risk to producers, their families and their workers of exposure to **zoonotic diseases**.

## **Why have a Biosecurity Plan?**

Disease is a major cause of loss; causing death, reduced production, decreased longevity, increased cost of treatment and lost revenue. The best option is to avoid diseases in the first place.

## **How can a Biosecurity Plan benefit me?**

1. more secure financial health for producers; reduced risks to your farm - less disease entering your farm and requiring action;
2. improved animal health and welfare - better livestock health generally leads to higher productivity;
3. reduced use of veterinary drugs - reducing medical costs and decreasing the risk of antibiotic resistance;
4. more secure market access, both local and national;
5. protection of human health; and
6. more secure financial health for farm workers and for farm service industries such as feed suppliers, processors, and veterinarians.

## **Is Biosecurity going to be a lot of work?**

Biosecurity does not have to be complicated or expensive to be effective. Even a small change such as the order in which pens of sheep are handled or fed, are beneficial.

## **Is there help/funds available?**

The National Sheep Producer Biosecurity Planning Guide is available online at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/planning-guide/eng>. The guide will assist you in developing & planning your biosecurity strategies.

The Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board offers Biosecurity training and also has a producer checklist available to use for your on-farm risk assessment.

Once you have taken the biosecurity training, funding is available to implement your biosecurity projects.

# Top 10 Biosecurity Risks for your Sheep Farm

1. Animal flow through your facility and risk of disease transmission between animal groups within your farm.
  - Disease is not universal across a farm
  - Be careful mixing age groups
  - Avoid mixing pregnant sheep
2. Unknown disease risk in sourcing new or replacement stock.
  - Probably the most important risk to your sheep flock is the introductions of other sheep try to limit frequency.
  - Know as much about the source flock as you can
  - Work with your vet to determine any testing.
3. Sheep leaving the farm, having direct contact with other animals and returning to the home flock.
  - Ideally this should be avoided but not always possible
  - Have a quarantine plan in place
4. Risk of transmission of disease within your flock; management of diseased animals.
  - Need to plan for managing sick animals
  - Ideally need a separated hospital area with protocols to keep disease from spreading
5. Risk of disease transmission from other livestock, working animals, wildlife, vermin, dogs and cats.
  - Need to control vermin, especially protect feed
  - Should have a stable cat population
  - Deworm dogs for tapeworm
  - Minimize wildlife contact
6. Risk of disease transmission within your flock from manure in your facilities and in storage on your farm.
  - Separating animals from their own feces as much as possible is always a good idea
  - Have a plan for manure disposal
7. Farm facilities, equipment, tools and vehicles used on your farm that may be contaminated with pathogens.
  - Need to identify key risks i.e.) tractor bucket used for feed and cleaning out barns and dead stock removal
  - Need to have a disinfection plan
8. Risk of disease transmission in movement and disposal of deadstock.
  - Deadstock are always a potential source of disease
  - Prompt disposal in accordance with local regulations is very important
  - Do not feed coyotes
9. Access to your flock by people from off-farm (service providers, farm workers and visitors) and risk of transmission of disease through them from other locations.
  - Think about visitors to the farm and the risk they pose
  - Not all visitors are equal risk
10. Disease awareness among farm workers and their ability to identify potentially at-risk animals.
  - Anyone working on the farm should know how to identify key diseases and know what to do if identified

## Your Biosecurity Plan!

Securing a farm for biosecurity is about knowing the risks of disease transmission and the ways in which animals can be exposed to disease, and taking steps to minimize those risks. Prevention through biosecurity is the most cost-effective protection from animal diseases. Building or updating your biosecurity plan will involve reviewing your current practices, farm layout and facilities to identify where gaps in your disease prevention might occur in order to adopt practices that will reduce those risks.

*For more information on Biosecurity for sheep please refer to the National Biosecurity Standard and Guide for Sheep Producers*

There is funding available through Growing Forward 2 for producers to implement on-farm biosecurity projects. To identify which areas of your farm need improvement follow the steps below:

1. Fill out the on-farm biosecurity risk assessment checklist
2. Identify possible gaps in your biosecurity practices
3. Develop a biosecurity plan for your production operation by proposing a project for each of the "risk management practices" you select for your plan.

The **Saskatchewan Sheep Biosecurity Program** will provide producer funding of 50% eligible costs to a maximum of \$1000 upon completion of biosecurity training. You may choose to complete this on-farm biosecurity risk assessment on your own or you may consult your flock veterinarian to assist you with the development of your biosecurity plan.

*Note: Producers who have an ongoing relationship with a flock veterinarian are encouraged to work together with him/her in developing a biosecurity plan.*



*For more information on the funding available please contact:*



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