

CFIA Animal Health, Welfare and Biosecurity Division

Biosecurity Recommendations

Re: Travellers to Canada - Visitors or Returning Canadian Residents

Concerns

Travellers (visitors and returning Canadian Residents), particularly those that have visited farms and other agricultural sites, pose a risk for the introduction of a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD), or a Plant Quarantine Pest, into Canada's susceptible animal or plant populations. The risk of disease and pest transmission is increased when travellers will be visiting farms and agricultural sites in Canada. The primary modes of disease and pest exposure inherent with travellers to Canada are:

- Mechanical transmission of microbial pathogens and plant pests on contaminated clothing, personal affects and animal and plant products; and
- Mechanical transmission of microbial pathogens on the person (skin).

These risks can be managed through the application of effective biosecurity measures at different stages of a traveller's itinerary (before, during and following their entrance to Canada).

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) disease information database indicates that the reporting of occurrences of animal diseases and surveillance activities in many countries is incomplete and disease status is, for the most part, unknown. However, travellers should attempt to determine if diseases of concern are known to exist. If disease status is unknown, travellers should assume the potential exists.

Strategy

The application of biosecurity procedures based on sound scientific data and principles can successfully mitigate the risk of the introduction of a FAD and Plant Quarantine Pest by travellers. Travellers visiting farms and agricultural sites while in another country should apply biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of transmitting disease between premises in that country and on their return to Canada. Similar biosecurity measures can be used for visiting farms and agricultural sites in Canada. However, it is recognized that the veterinary infrastructure, production practices, capital and physical resources in many countries differ from those in Canada and will influence the ability to implement the on-site biosecurity recommendations provided below. Where this is encountered, applying additional attention to biosecurity practices after leaving the farm/agricultural site will assist in mitigating the risk of the transmission of microbial pathogens and plant pests.

Minimum Biosecurity Recommendations for Attending Farms and Agricultural Sites in Other Countries and in Canada

It is recommended that only one farm/agricultural site be visited per day.

- *Note: Direct contact with farm/agricultural equipment may also pose a risk, and the precautionary measures described below should be taken into consideration if contact with such equipment has occurred outside of farms/agricultural sites per se.*

1) Prior to attending farm/agricultural site

- Determine the presence or status of disease or pest at the site - communicate with the owner/site manager prior to the visit and establish whether there are current suspected or reported occurrences of animal diseases and/or plant pests;
 - If the site is currently experiencing or has recently experienced a disease or pest outbreak, select an alternate location.
- Determine the current biosecurity protocols in place at the farm. If they are stricter than those recommended in this document adjust as necessary. If additional items are required for the visit, determine who is responsible for providing the additional biosecurity apparel and supplies;
- Obtain approval from the owner/site manager before bringing any personal materials (cameras, phones, watches, clipboards etc.) onto the site;
- Shower and don clean, freshly laundered/dry-cleaned clothing and underclothing for the site visit; and
- Don clean footwear for the site visit - footwear must be visibly clean, not previously worn on farm/agricultural sites or has been properly cleaned and disinfected.

2) At the farm/agricultural site

- Meet the owner/site manager at the gate to the premises;
- Advise the owner/site manager of any recent contact with other livestock, livestock facilities or plant nursery/production sites;
- Review site biosecurity protocols with the owner/site manager and comply with them. The protocols may include the following **recommended biosecurity practices**:

Prior to entering the area under biosecurity control visitors should:

- Don clean outerwear. This may include site-dedicated or disposable coveralls as well as site-dedicated or disposable footwear;
- Wash their hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer; and
- Clean and disinfect footwear if site-dedicated and disposable footwear is not provided.

- Move from clean to dirty areas and avoid areas that may be heavily contaminated with pathogens and pests (manure and livestock disposal areas, hospital pens for sick animals or quarantine areas for pest management);
- Avoid touching, or walking on animal feed, and manure, and other excreta. It is recommended site visitors walk only on hard surfaces where available;
- Have no direct contact with animals. If the visit requires a hands-on examination of animals, equipment or supplies, disposable latex or nitrile gloves should be used; and
- Do not remove anything from the premises without permission. Nothing should be taken from one farm/agricultural site to another.

At the conclusion of the visit:

- All site-dedicated or disposable clothing should be collected. This should occur immediately prior to exiting the area under biosecurity control;
- Wipe down with a disinfectant wipe any cameras, phones and personal affects that were taken onto the premises;
- Clean and disinfect footwear as necessary; and
- Wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer;

3) After each farm/agricultural site visit and/or before returning/travelling to Canada

Farm/agricultural site visitors should as soon as possible:

- Dry-clean or launder (in hot water with detergent and dry with high heat) any clothing and underclothing worn on site visits;
- Clean and disinfect any footwear worn on the site;
- Shower and wash their hair before changing into clean clothing; and
- If outer site-dedicated or disposable clothing/footwear was not worn during the site visit, ensure clothing worn on the site is kept separate from their other clothing (bagged) until it is cleaned.

4) Entering / Returning to Canada

Declaration to the Canada Border Services Agency:

Prior to entry into Canada, all travellers are obligated by Canadian law to present themselves to a border services officer, respond truthfully to all questions and accurately report their goods. This includes a requirement to report any food, plant and animal products in their possession.

All travellers must make a declaration regarding the length of time they have been in a foreign country and whether they have visited a farm/agricultural site, providing details as requested. They must also declare if they intend to visit an farm/agricultural site while in Canada. This will allow Canadian government officers to ensure the appropriate measures are taken to minimize the risk of the introduction of a Foreign Animal Disease or Plant Quarantine Pest.

- Travellers who have been on a farm/agricultural site prior to entry to Canada should not attend plant nursery/production sites or livestock facilities including: sales yards, abattoirs or other sites where any livestock are kept, for a minimum of 5 days from the date of last contact with the agriculture site in the foreign country.
- After this 5 day (or greater) period, travellers may enter farm/agricultural sites **but only** if they have taken the following measures.
 - Clothing and footwear worn on the farm/agricultural site in the foreign country should be cleaned, washed, dried and/or disinfected a second time as soon as possible after entering Canada.
 - Any imported equipment, materials, products and food acquired in the foreign country should not be taken onto a Canadian agriculture premises.
 - Follow steps 1-3 above prior to, during and after visits to farm/agricultural sites in Canada

***Note:** Farm/agricultural site owners/managers should confirm with all visitors (travellers and Canadian Residents) that they have not been in contact with a farm/agricultural site in a foreign country within the past 5 days and to ensure that appropriate biosecurity protocols are applied. Similarly, all visitors should advise the site owner/manager of recent foreign farm visits to ensure that appropriate biosecurity protocols are applied.*