

OFA FACT SHEET

August 2025

Biosecurity for Ontario agriculture

Overview

On-farm biosecurity is critical in protecting the health of livestock, poultry, and crops, safeguarding the food supply, and maintaining the economic stability of Ontario's agricultural sector. Diseases and pests can travel easily on people, vehicles, equipment, and even clothing, making every visitor and activity on a farm a potential risk. By following strong biosecurity measures, farmers can protect their animals, crops, livelihoods, and communities from costly and potentially devastating outbreaks.

Good biosecurity ensures the agricultural sector remains productive, sustainable and safe for generations to come.



What is it?

Biosecurity is the practices and precautions taken to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, and invasive species on farms.

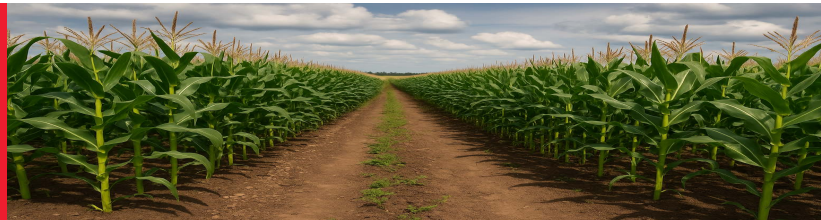
Where do risks come from?

- Livestock and poultry diseases
- Crop pests and diseases
- Invasive plants, insects, and weeds

How do they travel?

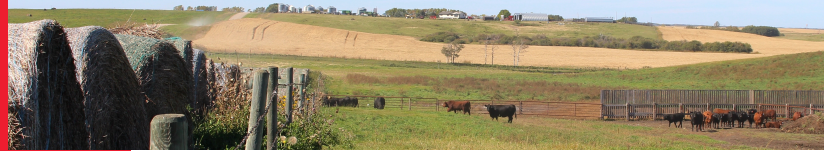
- Footwear, clothing, and hands
- Vehicles and tires
- Tools and equipment
- Water and feed sources

Why does biosecurity matter?



- **Animal health and welfare:** Protects livestock herds and flocks from contagious diseases that can spread quickly, leading to poor health or potential death.
- **Crop protection:** Prevents costly and difficult-to-control pest or disease outbreaks, and prevents the introduction and spread of invasive plant species.
- **Economic stability:** Helps avoid losses resulting from mitigation and remediation measures such as quarantines, restricted market access, and production losses.
- **Food supply security:** Reduces risks to Ontario's domestic and export food supply chains.
- **Community wellbeing:** Protects public health, livelihoods, and rural economies.

Key biosecurity principles



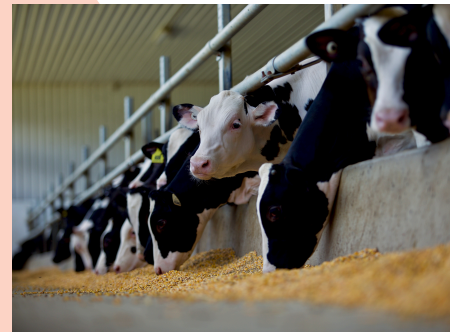
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- **Limit farm access:** Restrict entry to essential visitors only.
- **Control movement:** Manage movement of people, vehicles, animals, and equipment on and off the farm.
- **Clean and disinfect:** Remove visible dirt and use disinfectants to kill pathogens before entry.
- **Separate and isolate:** Keep new, sick, or high-risk animals and plants separate from healthy ones.
- **Monitor and respond:** Watch for signs of disease or pests and act quickly to contain them.

Other considerations:

Weather and environment: Pests and disease can be influenced by climate and weather. Warm, wet, humid summers can lead to outbreaks in crops. Extreme events such as high winds or flooding can spread pests and diseases to both plants and animals.

Migratory wildlife, such as birds, can carry diseases to livestock and commercial poultry.



Who is involved?

Farmers

- Develop and follow a biosecurity plan
- provide clear signage and designated entry points
- Supply visitors with boot covers, gloves, and disinfectant.
- Schedule visits to avoid high-risk times
- Keep visitor logs for traceability.
- Train all family members, employees and workers in biosecurity procedures.

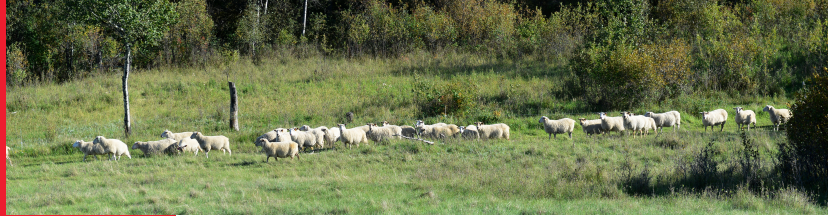
Visitors

- Call ahead before visiting.
- Follow all posted and verbal biosecurity instructions.
- Wear clean clothing and footwear; use protective equipment.
- Avoid visiting multiple farms in the same day, or when necessary, wash vehicles between visits and disinfect equipment and clothing between visits.
- Park in posted *visitor* areas; Stay in designated areas only.

Municipalities, Agencies, Industry

- Provide biosecurity training to all staff who may visit farms.
- Develop municipal/agency biosecurity policies for inspections and site visits.
- Use remote inspection tools where possible.
- Share biosecurity awareness resources with staff, contractors and the public.
- Respect farmers' rights to limit property access to protect biosecurity.

OFA's Role



- **Advocate** for strong biosecurity policies and programs at the provincial and federal levels.
- **Work** with commodity groups, veterinarians, and industry partners to promote best practices.
- **Provide** resources and guidance to members and the public to reduce risks on-farm.
- **Support** awareness and education.

Resources



- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) – Biosecurity Resources
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) – National Biosecurity Standards
- CFIA Biosecurity Checklist



More information

More information, including fact sheets, government submissions and resources, is available at ofa.on.ca/issues/farm-animal-care. For questions about any information included in the fact sheet, please contact comms@ofa.on.ca.

