

Guide: Managing animal biosecurity risks during authorised officer farm visits

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1. Purpose

This document provides guidance on managing animal biosecurity risks for officers authorised under NSW legislation conducting property visits where livestock are present.

It is well recognised that movement of people, vehicles and equipment are potential spread pathways for livestock disease agents.

2. Scope

This document provides guidance on minimising the risk of animal disease spread when officers authorised under NSW legislation visit properties in relation to animal health and welfare.

Directions in animal biosecurity hazard-specific procedures (e.g. during an emergency animal disease response) must be followed by authorised officers.

Work health and safety procedures (e.g. safe work method statements) must be followed by authorised officers and personal safety is a priority to be considered when visiting livestock properties.

The scope of this document is a guide for all authorised officers, however it should be taken to apply on the provision that it does not restrict or compromise any NSW Police Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the course of their official duties. It also does not apply to, and is not intended to prevent authorised officers entering, or being in a biosecurity management area, for the purposes of exercising their powers under the authority of a NSW law.

3. General biosecurity principles for on-farm visits with livestock

- i. Measures taken by authorised officers to mitigate animal biosecurity risks must be reasonable and practicable (NSW Government, 2019). What is reasonable and practicable will vary for each situation. Factors to take into consideration when putting measures into place include: purpose of the visit, authorised officer health and safety, pathogen(s) that may be present and where the authorised officer will be going after the visit.
- ii. Discuss biosecurity measures with the livestock owner prior to the visit.
- iii. Follow property-specific biosecurity management plans that are reasonable.
- iv. Where there is no property-specific property biosecurity management plan, refer to national industry biosecurity manuals (available at: <https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/plans-manuals/>)
- v. Keep timely, accurate written records of visits.

4. Mitigations by spread pathways

These guidelines are based on information contained in the national biosecurity manuals and NSW Health fact sheets.

4.1 Upper respiratory tract of people

- If you have influenza, wait at least 24 hours after your fever resolves before returning to work - this is likely to be 3-5 days (NSW Health).

4.2 Gastrointestinal tract of people

- Wait at least 48 hours after symptoms of gut upset have resolved before handling animals.
- As some conditions of significance (e.g. Salmonellosis) can be shed for several weeks after a person is infected, maintaining good personal hygiene (especially hand washing) is key in managing these risks (NSW Health, 2012).

4.3 Fomites – personnel (during a visit)

For all farm visits

- Personal protective equipment should be appropriate for the activity, pathogen and environment. Items required may include disposable overalls, rubber boots, gloves, mask, eye protection, ear protection, hat and sunscreen. Undertake a risk assessment and briefing prior to leaving the office and entering the property.
- wash off any animal fluid that contacts the skin promptly (LLS, n.d.).

Intensive industries

- wear farm-issued boots and overalls/clothing if available
- If wearing own clothing and footwear - scrape footwear to remove all visible organic material and then disinfect footwear using footbaths provided when entering and exiting the production area. Clean overalls must be worn and removed after exiting production area and;
- Wash/sanitise hands before and after entering production areas (NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2020).

Extensive industries

- Wash/sanitise hands before and after handling livestock,
- wear clean overalls for each property, and;
- clean and disinfect boots before getting back into vehicle (Local Land Services).

4.4 Fomites – personnel (stand-down period)

During the stand-down period (time that has lapsed since last contact with animals or other risk material such as blood and manure) personnel are required to head-to-toe shower with soap at least once.

After an overseas visit

- at least two days and up to 7 days after overseas visit where contact with livestock has occurred (Animal Health Australia et al., 2019)
- any clothing, footwear or equipment that was in contact with livestock overseas must be cleaned and disinfected prior to use in NSW;

Pigs

- no contact with any other pigs on the same day (i.e. within 12 hours); (Animal Health Australia et al., 2019)

Poultry

- no contact with any avian species or untreated poultry manure in the same day, unless a full shower and change of clothing has been carried out and;
- not keep poultry, caged birds or pigs at home (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

Beef feedlots

- discuss with manager prior to arrival, as the feedlot will assess all visitors entering the feedlot for their biosecurity risk prior to being granted access to the feedlot complex and surrounds (Animal Health Australia et al., 2013).

4.4 Fomites – equipment

- clean and disinfect equipment prior to leaving property- wear gloves to clean contaminated equipment and;
- where possible, leave any disposable contaminated equipment on the property (LLS, n.d.).

4.5 Fomites – vehicles

- parking position – where possible, park vehicles outside the production area, unless it is essential the vehicle be taken into the production area, such as for access to equipment or authorised officer health and safety reasons.
- before and after entering a poultry production area, clean the footsteps and wheel arches of the vehicle with soap or detergent and;
- maintain visually-clean vehicles, particularly the tyres, wheels, wheel arches and foot wells (LLS, n.d.; NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2020).

References

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