

Keep it Clean for Field Vegetables

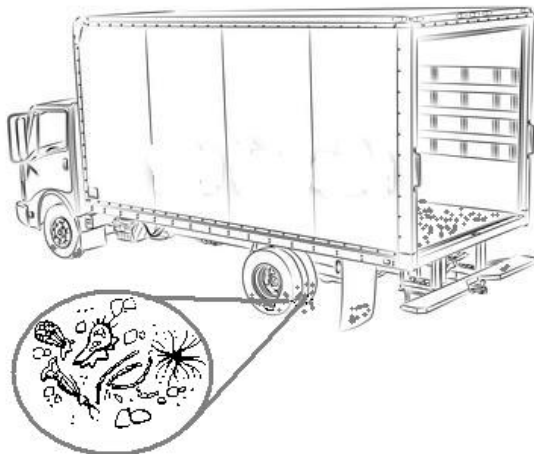
Vehicle movement and buffer zones

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Vehicle and machinery movement

Vehicles and machinery coming onto a farm are a high risk for introducing pests including insects, mites, nematodes, weed seeds and diseases. Delivery vehicles often travel from one farm to the next which creates a lot of opportunities for pests to hitch a ride to your farm and into your crop. Contractors for crop monitoring, sowing, spraying and harvesting are also moving from farm to farm.

All vehicles including trucks, tractors, trolleys and trailers used for transporting equipment or other items that will be taken into the field have the potential to spread pests. This can occur by the



direct transfer of contaminated material from the wheels or other part of the vehicle directly into the production area.

A vehicle management plan is needed. The access of vehicles has to be practical, but it also needs to reduce the risk that pests will be brought into your crop.

Assess the risk of a vehicle that has been off-farm for transporting pests. Ask questions and look at relative cleanliness of the vehicle. You may decide the risk is low and allow them to enter your 'clean' zone, only allow in the 'outside' zone or require a wash down before entering the 'clean' zone.

The most effective approach is to set up the farm so that vehicles which move on and off the property are never driven into the 'clean' zone of the farm.

Carefully manage the movement of visitors and workers into your 'clean' zone and determine whether they need to drive into your 'clean' zone. This will depend on the role they have on your farm and the size of your farm. Where practical, provide a parking area away from the production part of your farm, such as near the house where you park your own vehicle. It may be possible to transport all pickers for example to the field in a farm vehicle instead of having each picker drive their vehicle into the 'clean' zone. Use signs to direct visitors and, if feasible, a closed gate to prevent anyone accidentally driving into the 'clean' zone.

The delivery of farm inputs and loading of produce needs to be carefully planned. You need to be able to stop the delivery/pickup vehicle (including your own vehicles) from entering the 'clean' zone. The best method to achieve this is to set up a stopping bay for all vehicles on the edge of the 'clean' zone. Materials and product can be unloaded/loaded without the delivery/pickup vehicle itself moving into 'clean' zone. There are different ways of doing this.

A double entry storage and/or packing shed is a very good method. One entry faces the stopping bay for vehicles travelling off-site so that goods can be unloaded into the shed and produce can be loaded from the shed. The second entry faces the production area so that materials can be moved to and from the fields and shed. The shed in this situation is the quarantine boundary between the 'clean' zone and the 'outside' zone.

If it is not practical to have a double entry shed, the same process can be used with an open-air loading bay marking the boundary between the 'clean' zone and the 'outside' zone.

The access for fuels that may be delivered has to be carefully considered. The fuel storage tank needs to be located on the boundary between the 'clean'

zone and the 'outside' zone or entirely in the 'outside' zone so that deliveries can be made without these vehicles entering the production area.

If it is not feasible to stop vehicles that have travelled off-site from entering the 'clean' zone, then it is essential that a wash down bay is set up on the boundary between the two zones.

If a vehicle has been in an area that is infected with a disease, it should be thoroughly cleaned. Remove all rubbish and materials from the vehicle. A high pressure hose or steam cleaner needs to be used to remove soil and crop debris from the tyres, wheels and the undercarriage of the vehicle. Tray tops and flat beds should be swept clean and hosed off with clean water.

If you are using contractors for sowing, spraying and/or harvesting ask them about their risk management strategies to prevent the movement of pests between farms. Also ask crop consultants about their risk management strategies; do they have a footbath, wash hands and tools or change clothes between farms?

“Activity of people or tractors is minimised when foliage is wet, particularly when crops are showing signs of fungal or bacteria leaf diseases”

A particularly important time to control vehicle, machinery and human movement is when foliage is wet following irrigation or rainfall. This is especially so when a crop is showing signs of fungal or bacterial leaf diseases.

Buffer zones

Buffer zones are an important and relatively low cost management strategy that reduces the risk of pests affecting your crop. A buffer zone is a space that is kept clean or clear of things which could shelter insects, mites, nematodes and diseases. Ideally a 5 -10 metre buffer zone should be established around every field on the farm. The buffer zone surrounding a field must be kept free of all plants, rubbish, old substrate and crop residues. This area could be sealed, covered in gravel or mulched depending on the size of your operation.

“a 5 -10 metre buffer area is recommended around the production area on the farm”

Roadways and paths can be used as part of the buffer around the fields.

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