

# Farm Biosecurity



**Falkland Islands Government**  
**Department of Agriculture**  
**Farmfile Note**

## What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity can be defined as a set of measures designed to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests, weeds and diseases into a country, area or property. At the farm level this involves preventing pests, weeds and diseases coming onto the farm, for example, carried by animals or visitors, and limiting the spread of any pest, weed or disease following introduction.

## Why is on-farm biosecurity so important?

By practising better biosecurity, farmers can reduce or eliminate the impact of pests, weeds and diseases that are established in the Falklands, whether they have reached the farm or not.

Impacts of pests, weeds and diseases include:

- ◆ Reduction of productivity
- ◆ Reduction in quality and value of animal products
- ◆ The cost of control—it takes more time and money to control pests, weeds and diseases than prevent them

Better on-farm biosecurity also improves the Falklands' resilience to diseases that might come in from abroad, for example, foot and mouth. The overall size of any outbreak will be reduced when good biosecurity practices form part of everyday farming, rather than being introduced after the outbreak has started.

## How do pests, weeds and diseases spread within and between farms?

This will depend on the pest, weed or disease in question but in general the seven most common routes of transmission are:

- ◆ Livestock movement
- ◆ Animal waste
- ◆ Feed and water
- ◆ Airborne dispersal
- ◆ Vehicles and equipment
- ◆ Pest animals and wildlife
- ◆ Farm staff and visitors



## What can farmers do to increase biosecurity on their farm?

A wide variety of options are available to improve on-farm biosecurity, and their suitability will depend on the type of farm, species kept, existing management practices and the current disease status.

The following general biosecurity guidance will apply to most farms but you can always contact the Department of Agriculture for advice or to help develop a farm or Island biosecurity plan, specific to your operation.



## Livestock movements

Direct contact between a healthy animal and an infected animal is the most common way for pests and diseases to spread. So, managing both livestock movements and the introduction of new animals is particularly important.

- ◆ Check the health status of animals before purchasing and ensure you have all the correct paperwork
- ◆ Hold new stock in quarantine (30 days if animals are from overseas, 7 days if they're from within the Falklands)
- ◆ Whilst in quarantine give any treatment required e.g. worming, itch mite etc.
- ◆ Site quarantine pens near the entrance to the farm and away from other stock, where possible
- ◆ Regularly check your fencing
- ◆ Always comply with livestock movement regulations

# Farm Biosecurity

**Don't bring infection onto your farm; Don't spread infection around your farm; Don't transfer infection from your farm to others**



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## Animal Health Management

Disease prevention and control require regular attention to stock health, knowledge, planning, good record keeping and compliance with regulations.

- ◆ Consider good herd health practices including vaccination
- ◆ Regularly worm all dogs (every 5 weeks)
- ◆ Regularly inspect your animals for signs of disease and know what to look for
- ◆ Seek advice from the vets in relation to any unusual signs

## People and Equipment

Pests, weeds and diseases can be brought onto and spread around your farm by visitors, and their vehicles or equipment.

- ◆ Minimise the number of entry points
- ◆ Keep yourself and equipment clean when dealing with animals
- ◆ Provide facilities: hoses, disinfectant, brushes etc. for people to clean their equipment



## Feed and Water

Pasture, supplementary feed and water can be contaminated with pests, weeds and diseases.

- ◆ Inspect animal feed and seeds on delivery for evidence of pests, damage or contaminants
- ◆ Do not feed offal to dogs (to prevent the spread of hydatids disease)

## Pest Control

Vermin and feral animals can spread disease to your livestock and land, and invasive weeds can reduce the value of your wool and land. Vigilance and active management can mitigate these risks.

- ◆ Regularly monitor and control vermin and feral animals, pests and weeds to prevent impact on stock

## Animal Waste and Carcass Management

Dead animals and waste are a high risk source for some diseases. The life cycle of many pests involves them being shed in urine or faeces and the contaminated pasture being re-ingested.

- ◆ Check regularly for dead stock and bury immediately or ensure they are away from livestock, dogs or feral animals
- ◆ Don't put your water supply (and that of your neighbours) at risk from leaching-related contamination. Bear this in mind when siting your disposal areas

## Share Knowledge and Understanding

For farm biosecurity to be effective, everyone involved in your farm must be aware of your requirements and why they are important.

- ◆ Make good biosecurity practices indicators of your operation's quality, rather than necessary evils or procedures done under sufferance
- ◆ Ensure all staff understand their role in implementing good biosecurity practices
- ◆ If you're not sure, just ask!



**Here in the Falklands we're lucky to have very few established livestock diseases—let's keep it that way.**

For more information, contact the DoA on 27355 or email [biosecurity@doa.gov.fk](mailto:biosecurity@doa.gov.fk) / [sbowles@doa.gov.fk](mailto:sbowles@doa.gov.fk)