

This document has been published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

BIOSECURITY GUIDANCE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ANIMAL DISEASES

BIOSECURITY GUIDANCE ON ENTERING OR LEAVING PLACES WHERE FARM ANIMALS (INCLUDING POULTRY) ARE KEPT OR HAVE BEEN KEPT

*This guidance applies to **everyone** who enters a farm or premises with farm animals, or enters land used for grazing or keeping farm animals. This includes:*

- Owners of farm animals;
- those in charge of farm animals at any time, for example hauliers;
- vets and others who provide animals services, including Artificial Insemination technicians, foot trimmers, sheep dippers and scanner operators;
- government officials, including Local Government employees and staff working for Non Departmental Public Bodies;
- any contractor or other person acting for or on behalf of those already mentioned;
- others who access agricultural land, whether for business or pleasure.

It deals with the precautions to be taken when entering or leaving any premises with farm animals in the absence of an outbreak of exotic notifiable disease; after confirmation of an outbreak of exotic notifiable disease; and to premises under specific animal disease restrictions.

This guidance (prepared in accordance with legislation¹) applies generally to all premises with farm animals and to all exotic diseases. When followed it should help reduce the spread of animal diseases to other premises with farm animals.

This guidance is not intended to interfere with sensible public access to land and enjoyment of the countryside.

The message is simple:

- *disease may not always be apparent, especially in its early stages;*
- *be clean, particularly if handling animals or moving between different premises.*

Footnotes

¹ Section 16 of the Animal Health Act 2002, amending section 6A of the Animal Health Act 1981, as regards foot-and-mouth disease;

The Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease (England and Wales) Order 2003 and the Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease (Biosecurity Guidance and Disease Control (Slaughter) Protocol) (England and Wales) Order 2003, as regards avian influenza and Newcastle disease.

2. This text was amended on 6 November 2008, mainly to update the legislation reference on page 3. No other amendments of substance were made.

Index

Introduction including definitions and risk 3

Section 1. Visits to More Than One Premises with Farm Animals where there is Direct Contact with Farm Animals 5

- 1.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 1.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 1.3 Premises under Specific Disease Control Restrictions

Section 2 Other Agricultural Related Visits To Premises with Farm Animals 6

- 2.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 2.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 2.3 Premises under Specific Restrictions

Section 3 Non-agricultural Related Visits to Premises with Farm Animals 6

- 3.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 3.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease
- 3.3 Premises under Specific Restrictions

Section 4 Compulsory Biosecurity Measures Within Restricted 7 Infected Areas

Annex A. General Biosecurity Measures When In Direct Contact With Farm Animals 8

Annex B. Additional Biosecurity Measures When Visiting Premises With Farm Animals During an Outbreak of An Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease 9

Annex C. Measures which must be observed for Visits to Premises Under 10 Specific Restrictions

Introduction

1) Farm to farm movement of infected livestock is the most effective means by which animal diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease can be spread. Contact with animals and with their excrement also pose significant risks. Clothes, boots, vehicles and equipment can become contaminated and can carry disease from one premises to another. Diseases can also be spread by other means, such as wildlife, air or other vectors. This Guidance describes measures which will minimise the spread of diseases between different premises *via* contaminated clothes, boots, vehicles and equipment.

2) Implementing biosecurity measures as standard practice helps ensure that all those working with farm animals or coming into contact with them do not spread disease when they enter or leave a premises. This is important whether or not any disease outbreaks have been reported. Some diseases are zoonotic - they can be transmitted between humans and animals - therefore there are good public and occupational health reasons for having biosecurity measures. Proper biosecurity which effectively reduces the incursion and spread of disease reduces disease control costs and helps prevent the spread of plant diseases too.

3) For the purposes of these Guidance Notes the following definitions apply:

a) '**Biosecurity**' is the prevention of disease-causing agents entering or leaving any place where farm animals are present (or have been present recently – see paragraph 6). It involves a number of measures and protocols designed to prevent disease-causing agents from entering or leaving a property and being spread.

b) '**person**' means anybody who enters or leaves a premises with farm animals;

c) '**equipment**' means any thing which has been in contact with livestock or has been visibly contaminated with manure or other livestock products and is to be taken on to or off a premises with farm animals;

d) '**premises with farm animals**' means any premises in which farm animals are present either as a commercial concern or as pets. It also includes farms, livestock markets, shows, slaughterhouses and other premises where farm animals have been present in the recent past or are to be introduced.

e) '**direct contact**' means handling or intention to handle farm animals or working near farm animals where clothing may become contaminated, for example by saliva, excreta or milk.

f) '**disinfected**' means use of a disinfectant approved under the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) Order 2007 at the specified dilution rates and in compliance with the labelling instructions. Information on approved disinfectants can be found on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/control/testing_disinfectants.htm.

g) '**an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Disease**' is where the Chief Veterinary Officer of Defra has confirmed the presence of such a disease, for example Foot and Mouth Disease, Classical Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease. In the event of an outbreak a Press Release would be issued immediately and details posted on the Defra website. Details of Exotic Notifiable Diseases can be found on the Defra website.

4) Disease is not always apparent, especially in its early stages. Any person visiting a premises with farm animals and not carrying out effective biosecurity measures on entry and on leaving a premises runs the risk of spreading diseases to or from that premises. It is important to apply biosecurity measures even when animals have been removed from the premises, as disease causing agents and their vectors can

persist after the animals have left. The biosecurity measures taken should reflect the risk involved.

5) The most important biosecurity measures are:

a) To ensure that methods of working are designed to minimise where possible the movements of people, vehicles or equipment into areas where farm animals are kept, including fields, sheds, markets or other holding areas. This will minimise the potential contamination of people, vehicles and equipment with material that could carry diseases – manure, slurry and other products.

b) If direct contact with farm animals cannot be prevented then it is best practice to cleanse and disinfect protective clothing, footwear, equipment, vehicles etc. before and after the contact with the animals, or use disposable protective clothing.

6) In some premises farm animals are present for short periods of time e.g. showgrounds and markets. If these premises cannot be cleansed and disinfected then there is a legal requirement to rest them for 27 days. This rest period is critical for allowing the detection of some exotic notifiable diseases in animals that used the premises and, for most disease agents, reduces the risk to animals that subsequently use the land by allowing the infectious agent to decay naturally.

7) **Common land.** Common grazing provides an opportunity for the spread of disease. Owners and keepers need to follow these biosecurity guidelines every time they visit the common land in the same way as they would if they visited another premises with farm animals. The low stocking rates found on the large tracts of unenclosed rough grazing means that disease transmission by others, such as recreational users, is less likely.

8) The appropriate biosecurity measures depend on the risk associated with the visit. The risk of spreading disease varies with the degree of exposure to the animals and their products (e.g. manure, used bedding, milk etc) and the likelihood of passing infection on to others. Factors that determine the risks associated with visits include:

- a) Type of premises – e.g. arable, livestock, mixed, horticultural;
- b) Restrictions applied to the premises – e.g. animal disease control;
- c) Restrictions applied on all premises in a defined area – e.g. Restricted Infected Area / Infected Area;
- d) Extent and reason for the visit – e.g. farm house, B&B, animal handling or inspection, land inspection.

These are covered in more detail in the following Sections and Annexes. Unnecessary contact with animals is best avoided.

Section 1 - Visits to More Than One Premises with Farm Animals where there is Direct Contact with Farm Animals

1.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease

1.1.1 Persons entering premises with farm animals with the specific intention of handling animals (or their products) should wear protective clothing and footwear. The measures to be taken are at Annex A. Such persons should ensure that any vehicles or equipment taken with them are clean on arrival, making use of any facilities available.

1.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease

1.2.1 Visiting premises with susceptible animals in the event of a disease outbreak increases the risk that disease may be taken on to or off the premises as disease is not always apparent, especially in its early stages.

1.2.2 Only **essential visitors** should visit any premises with farm animals within areas where restrictions have been imposed. The minimum biosecurity measures to be taken are in Annex B.

1.2.3 The risk of spreading diseases is minimised when appropriate biosecurity measures are observed. Non-essential visits to premises with farm animals should be suspended.

1.3 Premises Under Specific Disease Control Restrictions

1.3.1 Under these circumstances only **essential visitors** should visit any premises that are subject to any specific animal health disease restrictions. Such visits may need to be licensed and the licence conditions and requirements followed. This is required by law and a breach may result in a criminal penalty.

1.3.2 Where a person needs to visit premises (e.g. statutory visit or inspection) on which animals have been or are about to be slaughtered for disease control reasons, the visit will only be permitted provided appropriate biosecurity measures are taken. Visits will normally only be authorised after slaughter and preliminary cleansing and disinfection of the premises have been completed. Such visits can only be made with the permission of the Divisional Veterinary Manager who will issue a licence where necessary. The measures to be taken are in Annex C.

1.3.3 In very exceptional circumstances a person may have to visit a premises before preliminary cleansing and disinfection has been completed. Such visits can only be made with the permission of the DVM and under the authority of a licence. The person may be accompanied by an officer from the Animal Health Divisional Office and must comply with the conditions in the schedule to the restrictions and any additional requirements of the licence. The person must follow the precautions in Annex C, particularly any requirement for a quarantine period, which in the case of Foot-and-Mouth disease is 72 hours.

Section 2 – Other Agricultural Related Visits To Premises With Farm Animals

2.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease

2.1.1 Persons entering a premises with farm animals should ensure their shoes or boots are clean when they enter and again when they leave. This applies even if they do not expect to come into contact with animals or their products. They should make use of any facilities provided and ensure, before and after the visit, that there is no manure or other animal product to be seen on their footwear, other clothing, vehicle or anything else taken with them.

2.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease

2.2.1 The guidance in Section 1.2 above (paragraphs 1.2.1 - 1.2.3) applies.

2.3 Premises Under Specific Restrictions

2.3.1 The guidance in Section 1.3 above (paragraphs 1.3.1 - 1.3.3) applies.

Section 3 - Non Agricultural Related Visits To Premises With Farm Animals

This section is aimed at recreational, social and non-farming visits, including visits by the public to Community Farms and access by power/water companies, for example.

3.1 In the Absence of an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Disease

3.1.1 Those who visit or have a right of access through premises with farm animals, for example on public footpaths or bridleways, should respect the legal boundaries and legal notices and use any facilities provided to clean mud/manure off footwear and vehicles (wheels, wheel arches etc). Direct contact with animals should be avoided. Where animals are handled or touched, hands should be washed as soon as practicable.

3.2 During an Outbreak of an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease

3.2.1 Visiting premises with susceptible animals in the event of a disease outbreak increases the risk that the disease may be taken on to or off the livestock premises.

3.2.2 Those who visit or have a right of access through premises with farm animals, for example on public footpaths or bridleways, should respect the legal boundaries and legal notices and use any disinfection facilities provided to clean mud/manure off footwear and vehicles (wheels, wheel arches etc). Direct contact with livestock should be avoided.

3.2.3 'Official' footpath closure signs may appear in an area around an Infected Premises within an Infected Area or a Restricted Infected Area. These must be respected.

3.3 Premises Under Specific Restrictions

3.3.1 The guidance in Section 1.3 above (paragraphs 1.3.1 - 1.3.3) applies.

Section 4 - Compulsory Biosecurity Measures Within Restricted Infected Areas

4.1 There are compulsory biosecurity measures that must be adopted when a Restricted Infected Area has been declared. These are required by law and their breach may result in a criminal penalty. They include:

a) Any vehicle or trailer entering or leaving a premises must be cleansed and disinfected on the outside and underside (and include the tyres (including the whole circumference of their treads), wheel arches, mudguards and mud flaps of the vehicle). Any parts of the vehicle or trailer where farm animals have been must also be cleansed and disinfected. All visible traces of mud, slurry, animal faeces, droppings or excretions or other similar matter must be removed, including any inside the vehicle. This must be done at the entrance and exit.

b) No person shall enter or leave any livestock premises wearing clothing or boots which are visibly contaminated with mud, slurry, animal faeces, droppings or excretions or any other similar matter or without cleansing and disinfecting the outer surfaces of their footwear on entering or leaving those premises.

c) Any person who tends any animal shall not leave the livestock premises on which the animal is kept wearing the outer clothing and footwear which they wore whilst tending the animal unless that clothing and footwear have been thoroughly cleansed and disinfected.

d) The owner or occupier of any premises where animals are kept shall maintain a footbath containing an approved disinfectant in some convenient place at every exit from those premises and renew the disinfectant as frequently as is necessary to maintain a clean solution and if so directed by an inspector.

Defra

1 July 2003

ANNEX A

GENERAL BIOSECURITY MEASURES WHEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH FARM ANIMALS

1) Where appropriate the visit should be made with the agreement of the owner or premises manager and any reasonable requests for additional biosecurity measures should be observed, especially if you have visited another premises with farm animals in the previous 3 days.

2) Livestock vehicles or trailers must be cleansed and disinfected in accordance with current legislation.

3) If other vehicles are taken on to the premises they should, wherever possible, be parked on hard standing away from farm animals and must be visibly free of animal excreta, slurry etc. Vehicles or trailers should not normally be taken into areas where

farm animals have access – these arrangements should be confirmed, where appropriate, with the owner or premises manager in advance of the visit. Before leaving the premises all visible contamination with manure, slurry or similar material must be removed (including where appropriate, cleaning of the inside of vehicles, especially foot wells and pedals). If this is not possible, vehicles and trailers must be cleaned before they are taken onto another premises with farm animals, either at the end of the day or before the next visit.

4) Owners or farm managers are recommended to have facilities available for disinfecting vehicles, footwear and clothing. If facilities are NOT available on farm, cleansing and disinfection should be arranged as soon as possible and before the next visit to a premises with farm animals.

5) Suitable protective clothing and footwear must be worn on all premises where visits include entering areas where farm animals are present or to which they normally have access. The type of protective clothing and footwear required depends on the nature of the visit, e.g. the protection required for a visit to a dairy herd would differ from that required for a visit to an extensive premises on moorland. Contractors such as shearers should ensure clothing is changed and washed between visits to different premises.

6) The purpose of the protective clothing and footwear is to prevent any contamination being carried from premises to premises. Protective clothing and footwear may be disposable or re-usable. The following are *examples* of types of protective clothing:

a) Disposable boiler type suits. These can be used once and should be discarded at the end of the visit to the premises. They can be left on the premises with the owner's agreement or bagged and suitably disposed of later, as can disposable overshoes for footwear.

b) Non-disposable protective clothing (e.g. cotton boiler suits or cotton coats). These may be used once and should be laundered before being re-used on any other livestock premises.

c) Waterproof protective clothing and waterproof boots. These should be cleansed and disinfected before entering the premises and again at the end of the visit just before leaving the premises.

7) All equipment used must be clean on arrival and on departure. Great care must be taken when cleaning electrical apparatus or tools. Where possible equipment should be protected from contamination e.g. using plastic bags. **Health and Safety rules must be observed.** Where equipment can be cleansed and disinfected this must be done before entry to the premises and again on departure.

8) For premises catering for Bed and Breakfast or farm tourism, it is advisable to keep visitors away from direct contact with farm animals and ensure as far as possible that they and their vehicles do not come into contact with animal excreta etc. Where there is contact with animals then hands should be washed and any contaminated clothing or shoes cleaned.

ANNEX B

ADDITIONAL BIOSECURITY MEASURES WHEN VISITING PREMISES WITH FARM ANIMALS DURING AN OUTBREAK OF AN EXOTIC NOTIFIABLE

The following measures must be observed:

- 1) The measures listed in Annex A.
- 2) It is recommended that either clean non-disposable protective clothing or waterproof protective clothing and waterproof boots are worn.
- 3) Sufficient water, disinfectant and disinfecting equipment should be taken on the visit, even if facilities for disinfecting clothes, footwear, equipment or vehicles are thought to be available on the premises.

Non-essential vehicles, e.g. cars/vans, should be parked outside the premises wherever practicable.

ANNEX C

MEASURES WHICH MUST BE OBSERVED FOR VISITS TO PREMISES UNDER SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS

The following measures must be observed:

- 1) The measures listed in Annex B.
- 2) A visit should be made only with the permission of the Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) who will issue a licence where necessary.
- 3) Waterproof protective clothing and waterproof boots should be worn at all times unless there is specific written dispensation from the DVM.
- 4) Any additional measures required by the licence. This may include a quarantine period. For example, in the case of Foot and Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza or Newcastle Disease any person who comes into direct contact with relevant susceptible animals or poultry, their manure, by-products or carcasses either in the course of their work or as a consequence of residing on a premises on which such susceptible animals are kept should not visit another livestock premises for 72 hours unless authorised in writing by the DVM.