

# Maryland 4-H Animal Science Program Guidebook

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## Biosecurity: Extension Personnel

Disease spread is a current and real threat among our producers. While many do not feel that there is a need to maintain biosecurity measures when visiting neighboring operations, it is up to Extension personnel to set the standard and utilize disease prevention procedures.

Biosecurity, in the context of livestock production, refers to those measures taken to keep disease agents out of populations, herds, or groups of animals where they do not already exist. There is occasion to visit the youth animal projects on multiple farms in one day, and in order to limit the spread of disease, it is important for Extension employees to follow good management practices.

When planning to visit livestock facilities or farms to examine project animals, Extension personnel should follow these guidelines as necessary and possible:

- Schedule as few farms as possible having the same species of animals on the same day. It would be better to visit one hog project, one lamb project, and one steer project on the same day rather than three hog projects.
- Visit full-time livestock farms first on a given day. The impact of a biosecurity breach is greater for a livestock production unit than a site where there is only a market project animal(s). Avoid contact with animals unless absolutely necessary for the purpose of the visit.
- Keep the number of people in the party to a minimum. For biosecurity, it would be better to have multiple small groups visiting different farms rather than one large group visiting all the farms.
- Use disposable plastic boots if the visit requires entering animal facilities. Wear coveralls if animal contact is possible. New disposable coveralls or clean reusable coveralls should be worn for each farm.
- Request that each farm supply as much equipment as possible for use with their own animals (nose-leads, snares, tattoo sets, tag applicators, buckets). Clean and disinfect all transported equipment before and after use at each location.
- Clean hands and exposed skin with antibacterial soap before and after handling animals.
- Wear disposable examination gloves whenever possible.
- Leave used disposable items (boots, coveralls, gloves) at the farm where they are used when possible. The owner can seal all the items in a plastic trash bag for easy disposal. Clean and contaminated items that need to be transported by the visitor should be placed in separate containers to prevent cross-contamination.

Resources:

Biosecurity Fundamentals for Extension Personnel, Gary L. Bowman, D.V.M. and William P. Shulaw, D.V.M. Ohio State University Extension Factsheet, 6/2001

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/vme-fact/0005.html>

Biosecurity Guidelines for Personnel Visiting Youth Livestock Projects, David W. Snively West Virginia University Extension Service

<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/Biosecure/Livestock.pdf>

Biosecurity Protocols for Field/Farm Visits, F. William Pierson, ACPV Center for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Diseases College of Veterinary Medicine Virginia Tech, 3/2010

[http://www.extension.org/pages/Biosecurity\\_Protocols\\_for\\_Field%2FFarm\\_Visits](http://www.extension.org/pages/Biosecurity_Protocols_for_Field%2FFarm_Visits)