Biosecurity for Sheep and Goat Producers

Last Modified:

Biosecurity is a series of management practices designed to prevent the introduction, delivery, and spread of disease pathogens that can harm or adversely affect livestock, crops, environments, and people. These practices may also help eliminate or control diseases already existing on the premises.

Below are topics related to biosecurity and APHIS Veterinary Services' role in emergency planning and response and public health. Additionally, links to other sources of information on biosecurity on the farm are included below.

Expand All

Principles of Biosecurity

Segregation

Keeping infected animals and contaminated material away from uninfected animals is the most important and effective part of biosecurity. The following are strategies you can use to achieve segregation:

- Maintain a closed flock. If this is not possible, only purchase animals that appear healthy and have been inspected by a veterinarian within the last 30 days, and keep them separate from your flock for at least 30 days.
- Restrict access to your premises to employees and service personnel, since pathogens can be introduced by vehicles, clothing, and equipment.
- Establish a clean/dirty line, where only certain people, vehicles, and equipment are allowed on the clean side.
- Require a waiting period of 24 to 48 hours between livestock premises visits for your employees and also your veterinarian.
- To the extent possible, prevent contact between your animals and poultry, pets, wildlife (particularly ruminants and waterfowl) and rodents. If this is not practical, it is important to prevent the use of feed and water sources for your sheep and goats by these other animals. Feed and water receptacles should be cleaned and disinfected on a frequent basis.
- Use insect control measures, as these pests can transmit pathogens.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection of animal housing facilities, vehicles, and equipment (including boots and clothing) is a very effective way to minimize disease transmission to or between your animals. Clean everything that is moved between livestock premises and within your own premises. Regularly clean production areas and always clean equipment after use.

Manure, dirt, and other potentially heavily contaminated materials need to be cleaned from housing facilities, vehicles, and equipment. Follow these two steps to ensure proper cleaning:

1. Apply detergents and foaming agents to surfaces before cleaning to help remove organic matter and debris.
2. Use hot water to rinse, and if possible, rinse with high pressure.

After cleaning, let all surfaces dry completely. Then, apply a disinfectant(s) directly to all cleaned surfaces. The selection and use of disinfectants will depend on many factors, including corrosive properties and safety, mechanism of action, presence of organic matter, and the pathogens you are worried about. Rotate the disinfectants you use to avoid pathogens becoming resistant to the action of a particular disinfectant’s compounds.

Emergency Management

APHIS' National Preparedness and Incident Coordination Center develops strategies and policies for effective animal health incident management and helps coordinate incident responses.

Visit Emergency Management for more information about our planning and response activities.

Visit Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response to download APHIS animal incident response and continuity of business plans.

Zoonotic Diseases

Zoonotic diseases are diseases of animals that can infect humans. Humans can contract zoonotic diseases through direct contact with infected animals, as well as by consumption of contaminated food or water; inhalation; arthropod vectors (such as flies, ticks, and mosquitoes); and pests.

There are several zoonotic diseases of sheep and goats. Protect yourself and your employees by learning more about these diseases at Sheep and Goat Disease.

More Information for Veterinarians

National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps

When an animal health emergency occurs, an immediate response is necessary to protect both animals and people. APHIS will look to many sources to obtain the veterinary personnel needed to help meet the critical staffing needs of such an emergency.

In 2001, APHIS established the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC) to respond to exotic disease outbreaks and other disasters that affect livestock, poultry, companion animals, and wildlife. More volunteers are urgently

needed to assure a decisive response to any potential animal health crises.

Visit NAHERC to learn more about the program or join as a volunteer

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is safety equipment and defensive tools developed to protect personnel from the hazards of their job's environment by anticipating the unexpected. Using PPE reduces the chance of suffering an injury.

You can find PPE designed to protect:

- Eyes—goggles, face shields, safety glasses
- Face—face shield, protective shields, barriers
- Head—hard hat, bump hat
- Ears—earplugs, earmuffs
- Feet—safety shoes, boots
- Hands and arms—gloves, sleeve guards
- Protective clothing—vests, safety suits, safety jackets
- Body—shields, barriers, restraints
- Airways/lungs—respiratory devices

View more information on PPE (1.8 MB)

Related Links

- National Animal Health Emergency Management System Materials
- American Sheep Industry Association—Biosecurity
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency—Biosecurity Standards and Principles
- University of Maryland Cooperative Extension—Biosecurity for Sheep and Goats Presentation
- Cooperative Extension—Goat Biosecurity

Print