



Louisiana Youth Livestock Program

Fact Sheet

Biosecurity and Reducing Livestock Disease Risks

- Biosecurity refers to those measures taken to keep disease agents out of populations, herds, or groups of animals. Currently there is heightened awareness of national biosecurity as the U.S. attempts to keep foreign animal diseases including foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) out of its animal population.
- In addition to national concerns, states take measures to prevent the entry of livestock diseases they have been able to eliminate from their herds by setting requirements for arriving animals. Examples of diseases that are of particular concern to states include brucellosis, tuberculosis, and pseudorabies.
- Reducing the risk of disease in your animals starts with selecting healthy animals for your project. Purchase animals from sources that have a well-developed health program. Ask questions about the health of the herd. Work with your veterinarian to design a health program specific to your needs. For most 4-H and FFA members, this will involve some vaccinations, parasite control, and a sound feeding program.
- When you take your show animals off your farm and expose them to other animals, there is the possibility that they may bring back new germs that could spread to the other animals on your farm. This is common with viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory diseases in cattle, sheep and swine. The recent outbreak of FMD in the United Kingdom has made everyone more aware of how easy it is to spread some infections among animals.
- Do not bring sick or diseased animals to the livestock show.

- Recommended procedures to enhance biosecurity and reduce livestock disease risks from terrorism or other sources in the youth livestock program and livestock shows
 1. Agents, FFA advisors, and volunteer leaders wear clean footwear and clothes when visiting 4-H and FFA livestock projects. Disinfect footwear between project visits.
 2. Isolate all purchased animals for a minimum of two weeks and, preferably, for 30 days.
 3. Require veterinary exams of all animals participating in shows.
 4. Make sure the equipment used to haul your animals is clean and recently disinfected with a product such as Virkon S.
 5. Avoid sharing of grooming equipment and feed and water containers.
 6. Discourage show visitors from petting or feeding your animals except at designated petting exhibits.
 7. Practice good personal hygiene.
 8. Be cautious regarding who has contact with your livestock. Limit visitors to your farm or project location.
 9. Once you are at the show, be sure your animals have access to clean water and feed in containers you provide.
 10. Advise producers to isolate show animals returning to their farm for a minimum of two weeks, and preferably, for 30 days.
- Veterinarians should immediately report any suspicious symptoms to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and state officials.
- In the case of an outbreak of FMD (or other serious livestock disease) in the U.S., livestock shows around the country may be suspended indefinitely by local, state, and/or federal officials.
- Exhibiting livestock is an enjoyable and educational experience. Following a few simple guidelines to help keep your livestock healthy during the show season can pay big dividends.