

What is farm biosecurity?

The introduction or spread of new weeds, pests and diseases onto your property can reduce production and cost you time and money. The best defense is prevention, by implementing sound biosecurity practices. Quick and simple measures built into everyday practice will help protect your farm and your future. Farm biosecurity is your responsibility, and that of every person visiting or working on your property.

Top five tips for better biosecurity on your farm

1. Have a plan

Every farm is different. By developing a biosecurity plan, you can ensure you are addressing the priority issues for your farm and that it fits your work program.

- Familiarise yourself with the high-priority weed, pest and disease threats for your industry and region.
- Find out how you can reduce the risk of these threats and implement appropriate preventative measures.
- Know what endemic weeds, pests and diseases are already on your farm and how to manage them effectively. Inform visitors (if necessary) to prevent them from spreading further.
- Conduct regular active pest surveillance and monitoring of commercial crops and pastures and record results, even when nothing is found.
- Ideally, common areas (such as those around sheds and housing) should be well gravelled and kept free of weeds.
- Make sure anyone who visits your farm is aware of and adheres to your biosecurity plan.

Contractor entry to a farm should be conditional on adhering to farm biosecurity plans and hygiene protocols. Therefore, it is important to display these instructions using clearly visible signage.



2. Restrict movement

Anyone visiting your property can unknowingly introduce weeds, pests and diseases. There are some simple measures you can take to limit the biosecurity risk visitors pose to your farm.

- Limit entry points to the property.
- Where possible, restrict visitor vehicle access to clearly signed visitor parking areas.
- Ensure only on-site vehicles are used to transport visitors and equipment around your farm.
- Keep vehicles to designated roads, where possible.
- Limit visitor contact with livestock, crops or plant materials.
- If you run a business that has a tourism component, you should clearly indicate and enforce any entry requirements to all visitors prior to entry.

3. Come clean go clean

Weeds, pests and diseases can enter a farm and be spread by vehicles, machinery and equipment. They can be carried on vehicles by tyres, undercarriages, grills, floors and trays, and can also be present in plant material, soil or manure. It is important to maintain equipment hygiene and ensure all vehicles that visit your property are clean and well-maintained.

- If visitors or their vehicles require access to production areas, ensure all equipment, boots and clothing are clean and free from pests, weed seeds and plant material before entering or leaving.
- Special consideration should be paid to people who are returning or visiting from overseas to ensure clothing and footwear is free from contamination.
- Develop an effective clean-down area where farmers and contractors can clean and decontaminate all vehicles, machinery and equipment entering the farm. Use clearly visible signage to identify the clean-down facility to visitors.
- Make staff hygiene supplies available where appropriate (e.g. hand sanitiser, gloves, masks, disinfectant footbaths, disposable over-boots and overalls).
- Provide training to all farm staff in regard to biosecurity and farm hygiene practices.
- Advise contractors and visitors if a declared or notifiable weed, pest or disease has been confirmed on the property.
- It may be practical to assign equipment (including tools, clothing, and footwear) for use in weed, pest and disease affected areas.

4. Ensure all production inputs coming onto your farm are weed, pest and disease free

Farm inputs such as seed, fertiliser, feed and propagation material may contain weeds, pests or diseases.

- Ask for weed and pest-free certifications for any produce coming onto your farm.
- Ensure that animal manure and green waste is aged and thoroughly composted to destroy weed seeds and diseases.
- Isolate new stock in a holding paddock for seven days to contain any pests, diseases or digested weed seeds.

5. Keep records

Monitor and record all people, product and vehicle movements on and off your farm. These registers can be used in the case of a biosecurity emergency for tracing purposes.

- Place farm biosecurity signs at main entrances advising visitors to check-in (visitor registers should include phone numbers and/or UHF channel).
- Keep records of farm inputs, including supplier contact details, brand or cultivar and date of purchase.
- Keep records of produce harvested and sent off your farm.
- Keep a diary of spray herbicide, pesticide and fumigation treatments for crops and adhere to withholding periods.

For further information, or to report a suspected weed, pest or disease, call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit www.daff.qld.gov.au

