

# Farm Biosecurity for Livestock Producers

secure your farm | secure your future

[www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)



# Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility

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While there are good biosecurity measures in place at Australian borders to protect our agriculture and wildlife, the first line of defence against pests and diseases is to implement sound biosecurity practices at the farm level. Quick and simple measures built into your everyday practice will help protect your farm, your bank balance and your future from the costly consequences of diseases, pests and weeds.

At a farm level, you are most likely to notice changes in the health of your livestock, pastures and crops, so it's important to implement your own biosecurity measures.

As experience has shown, it's easier and cheaper to reduce the risks now than to try and live with pests and diseases that become established.

**Farm Biosecurity:** reducing risks to your business by limiting the likelihood of introducing and spreading animal diseases, pests and weeds.

Biosecurity measures can be very simple and can become part of a regular routine. Most measures are low-cost and will go a long way to securing your farm and your future.


## Spotted anything unusual?

For further information visit



[www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)

Farm Biosecurity is a joint initiative of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia



Biosecurity practices should be considered as part of your business risk assessment. You can achieve financial benefits by better targeting your resources, protecting your assets and avoiding costly mistakes.

Assess the risks to your property, determine what an acceptable risk level is for you and implement measures to reduce any risks that are too high. This forms the basis of your biosecurity plan—it's that simple!

The potential benefits of implementing biosecurity practices on your property include:

- ✓ **Greater productivity on your farm** – better livestock and plant health generally leads to higher productivity
- ✓ **Reduced risks to your farm** – less diseases, pests and weeds entering your farm and requiring action
- ✓ **Early detection and management of any pests or diseases** – catch any problems before they take hold
- ✓ **Reduced costs if there is an outbreak of disease, pests or weeds** – early detection and sound farm biosecurity practices may result in faster eradication and shorter quarantine periods.

## What you can do

Simple and effective measures can help protect your property and your livestock from diseases, pests and weeds. In fact, you're probably already doing some now.

Think about the following **five management areas** and what measures you can implement to protect your livestock.





# Farm inputs

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Bringing livestock, feed, bedding, fertilisers and chemicals onto your farm is the most common way of unintentionally introducing harmful and costly diseases, pests or weeds to your farming operation. That's why it's important to monitor all of your farm inputs to reduce potential threats. Best practice is to inspect all inputs prior to purchase/receipt. (E.g. Check animal health statement and NVD before making a purchasing decision.)

Here are some ways you can reduce risks associated with your farm's inputs:

### New livestock

- ✓ Buy livestock from a trusted source, with a National Vendor Declaration (NVD) and animal health statement. Animal health statements can be found on [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)
- ✓ Animal health statements provide a declaration of disease statuses for the animals being purchased. This statement will help you to make a risk assessment about the possibility of introducing an unwanted and potentially costly disease on your property.

### Michael Craig

Mixed broad acre farmer, Harrow, Western Victoria

***"Within the property's business model, biosecurity is viewed as a key management platform that sits alongside the enterprise risk management profit drivers."***

Over the last 25 years Michael's property has never experienced a lice, foot rot or QJD outbreak. With a collection of 13 neighbours, keeping this disease free status has been a result of diligent and consistent management practices including the stringent monitoring of farm inputs and outputs.

- ✓ Inspect the animals' health on arrival and isolate for 10 days to allow for signs of disease and elimination of weed seeds. Seek veterinary advice if signs of illness are seen. Some diseases have long incubation periods or may not be apparent even after 10 days. Note: Stock inspection should be a daily activity. For further information refer to the National Farm Biosecurity Reference Manual: Grazing Livestock Production and [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)



## Purchasing and storing feed, bedding and water

- ✓ Request a Commodity/ By-product Vendor Declaration (C/BVD).
- ✓ Make sure feed is fit for purpose and doesn't contain high levels of weed seeds or contaminants (including chemicals).
- ✓ Store feed in a clean, dry area to prevent deterioration and mould, or contamination from vermin or feral animals.
- ✓ Inspect water sources and prevent access for feral and wild animals. Stagnant water attracts insects and other pests that can spread disease.

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## Terry Toohey

Dairy farmer, Casino, New South Wales

***“This is easy risk assessment – no declaration, no purchase. It just simply won’t get unloaded without a properly completed declaration.”***

Terry and his staff continuously purchase stock feed ingredients and must be certain that all feed is free from chemical residues, moulds and contaminants. He ensures they receive a Commodity Vendor Declaration or By product Vendor Declaration for each product entering the property. On receipt Terry assesses the feed stuff by taking samples and inspecting for pests, mould and weed seeds, as well as looking at withholding periods on products treated with chemicals.

## Restricted animal material (RAM) and swill feeding

Feeding RAM to ruminants is illegal in Australia as it is linked to the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease). Swill feeding is also illegal and has been found to spread diseases like foot and mouth disease in many countries. For further information please see [www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au)



# Farm outputs

Responsibility for biosecurity doesn't end when your livestock (or their products) leave the farm gate. By implementing good management practices in your farming operation, you'll be playing an important role in protecting your region, and possibly the entire industry, from devastating disease outbreaks.

These practical measures will help ensure your biosecurity practices extend into the wider community:



Photo: Raeleen Strong

## Moving animals off your property

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- ✓ Make sure your animals are fit to travel before loading. Diseased/injured animals should not be moved off property and if necessary you should seek veterinary attention.
- ✓ Supply a NVD and animal health statement.

## Taking animals to shows and sales

- ✓ Ensure pens/housing areas are clean before they enter.
- ✓ Feed and water your livestock separately, if possible.
- ✓ Never share equipment – if you must, always clean and disinfect before and after use.
- ✓ Isolate any returning stock for 10 days to allow for weed seed elimination and signs of diseases and pests.

# People, vehicles & equipment

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Staff, visitors, vehicles and machinery can be unintentional carriers of diseases, pests and weeds that could be detrimental to your livestock and your business.

Consider these simple and effective measures to control potential risks associated with visitors entering your property:

- ✓ Control who enters your property by limiting entry points (one entry point is preferable) and locking restricted areas.
- ✓ Have visitors report to management and sign a visitor register on arrival, or write in your daily diary who visited the property.
- ✓ Encourage the use of protective clothing and personal cleanliness when visitors move onto your property. Provide facilities for them to clean boots and equipment on arrival and prior to departure.
- ✓ Display clear, simple and highly visible signs to support your farm's biosecurity messages, for example, a sign asking people to report to the house or the office before driving around the property.

- ✓ Clean and disinfect tools and feeding equipment before and after use, and store away from potential contaminants.

### Thomas Hill

Sheepmeat and crop farmer,  
Colbinabbin, Victoria

*"It is easy to be lax with hygiene when under the pump but the dividend for vigilance comes later when you've got beautiful, clean paddocks. Don't think of cleaning time as 'down time'."*

Tom has a philosophy that everything that enters and leaves the property must be clean. That means keeping clean machinery and equipment even when the family is "flat out at harvest". Tom uses air compressors and high pressure water cleaners for vehicles when moving from farm to farm and insists on using his own equipment on-farm to reduce the risk from contractors.





# Production practices

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## Ian Rathjen

Stud sheep, grape and crop producer, Colbinabbin, Victoria

*“We implemented strict biosecurity practices because there was an immediate threat to our income and way of life.”*

The success of Ian's enterprise relies on a strict hygiene regime for all people, livestock and crops on the property. Ian has managed to keep his sheep free of ovine Johne's disease and his grapes free of phylloxera through a program of frequent monitoring, vaccination and auditing by specialists in the field.

The way you manage your livestock is crucial to preventing disease outbreaks on your property, or limiting its spread. Good biosecurity management practices can easily be incorporated into your day-to-day farming activities.

Here are some simple production practices to help reduce the occurrence and spread of diseases, pests and weeds:

## Animal husbandry

- ✓ Establish an active livestock monitoring/recording program to identify potential disease, pest and weed threats. Your local or DPI veterinarian should be able to assist with the development of such a program.
- ✓ Vaccinate and drench stock on entry to the property to prevent diseases and pests, and separate any sick or suspect animals.

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## Fences

- ✓ Inspect all perimeter fencing regularly and repair damaged areas to ensure your stock stay in and straying stock and feral animals stay out.

## Chemical usage

- ✓ Ensure your staff has appropriate training on safe chemicals use. Keep an application diary for livestock, pastures and crops, and adhere to withholding periods (WHPs) and export slaughter intervals (ESIs).
- ✓ Set a livestock treatment schedule and record treatment dates and WHPs.

## General farm hygiene and maintenance

- ✓ Ensure farm equipment is clean and disinfect in between use on individual animals.
- ✓ Manage and apply treatment to sick animals only after you have had all necessary contact with your healthy livestock. If this is not possible disinfecting between moving from sick animals to healthy should be undertaken.
- ✓ Avoid borrowing machinery/ equipment where possible or clean / disinfect equipment before and after use.



# Ferals, pests & weeds

Feral animals pose a risk to your property through direct impact on your livestock, and by carrying disease onto and around your property.

You can minimise these threats by applying some of the following measures:

- ✓ Develop a feral animal/pest control program and record control dates and procedures.
- ✓ Work with your neighbours – what is affecting you could be affecting them.
- ✓ Identify and control weeds (with neighbours).
- ✓ Monitor livestock, strays and feral animals for signs of disease and sickness, and call the confidential **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** on **1800 675 888** if you notice anything unusual.

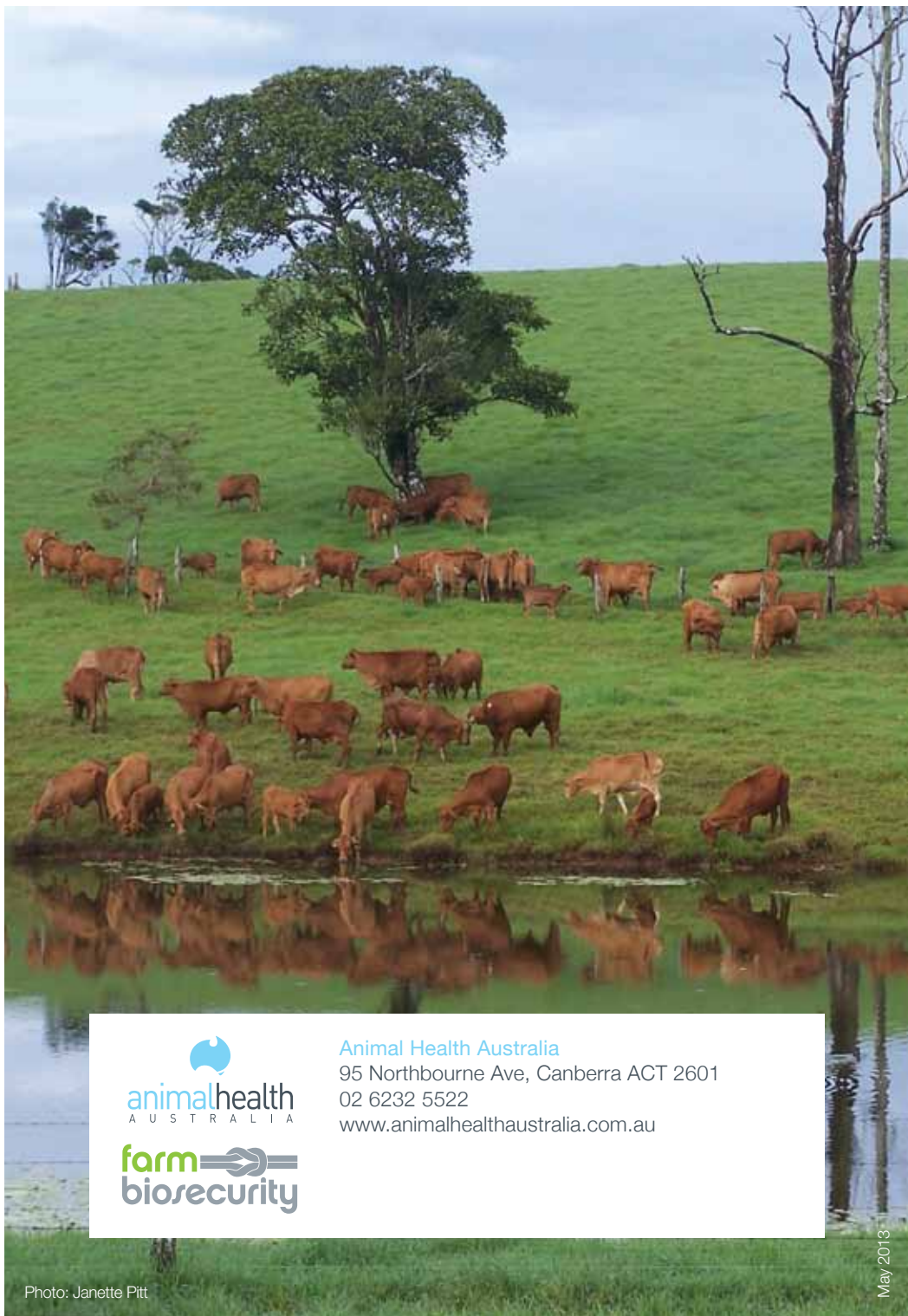
## Ken Skews

Beef producer, Ensay, Victoria

*“Nothing changes until you do. Managing as a collective on both sides of the fence is the way to go to sustainably manage this land with the problems we face.”*

Significant sheep losses to wild dogs saw Ken form the Watts Creek Baiting Group, where more than 15 local farmers collectively support each other to carry out baiting across the district. The group also built and maintain dog exclusion and conventional fences to target the ‘weak spots’ in their defences. As a result, an area of 8,900 hectares is now protected through the community program.

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Photo: Janette Pitt

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