



DRAFT

Biosecurity Protocols for Field/Farm Visits

Pamela B. King- Extension Agent

One of the common duties of Maryland Cooperative Extension personnel, Maryland Department of Agriculture inspectors, and others, is to visit citizens at their place of business—the farm or agricultural operation—to assist them in solving problems and maintaining regulatory compliance. While this is usually the most practical and convenient way to do business, it also creates a responsibility on the part of field personnel to be certain that they do not move animal, plant, or soil pathogens (any disease, not just the highly pathogenic ones) from operation to operation. To be sure that you are doing all you can to protect your clients, follow the following procedures:

1. Assess the risk, before the visit

Low Risk – Areas visited: home, office, routine crop field visits; no animal or manure contact
Number of visits per day: Few
No report of unusual disease or other serious problems

Moderate Risk- Area visited: Crop field or animal facility; minimal animal/manure contact
Number of visits per day: Several
Possible report of unusual disease or other serious problem

High Risk- Area visited: Several fields, animal facilities, direct animal/manure contact
Number of visits per day: Many, may include animal auctions or other animal congregation sites (weighing, tagging, breeding, etc.)
Report of unusual disease or other serious problem

2. Take precautions

Low Risk - Wear a washable light jacket and hat. Wash exposed areas-hands, face, arms- after visit. Wear washable or disposable boots- remove and wash or dispose of boots before leaving facility.

Moderate Risk - Wear single-use disposable coveralls and boots (one pair of coveralls and boots per site). Remove before entering car and put in a sealed plastic bag before leaving. Dispose of bag properly on site.

- If more rugged washable, rubber boots are used, be sure to scrub, then sanitize boots before leaving a site.
- Washable coveralls should be changed between site visits and put in a sealed plastic bag, then washed at the end of the day. Wash separately.
- If you become contaminated or suspect problems at the farm- **STOP**. Do not make additional visits that day. Shower well.
- Visit cleanest sites first and dirtiest sites last.

High Risk – Use protocols outlined for moderate risk. Additional personal protective equipment may be required (i.e. mask/respirator, protective eyewear). Following the visit, self-quarantine for 72 hours. Consider **who** should visit a site where a serious problem is reported.

3. Carry appropriate equipment

- Boots- single use booties or washable rubber
 - Basin, brush and disinfectant (8 tablespoons (4 ounces*) household bleach/gallon water)
- Washable jackets- wash daily
- Hats- wash daily
- Tyvec disposable coveralls with hood
- Particle respirator/mask
- Plastic bags- several sizes

4. Other important procedures

- Continue to assess risk once you are on the facility and take appropriate action
 - If risk level increases due to detection of suspicious disease, etc., follow the procedures for the higher risk level
- **Always** remove any organic matter (i.e. manure) from vehicles, shoes, etc. before leaving a facility. Consider disinfectant treatment of vehicle based on risk.
- Do not drive vehicles inside animal production areas. Park in designated visitor parking.
- Call ahead. Respect the client's right to limit access to vulnerable areas.
- **Think biosecurity first.**

* As per F. William Pierson, MS, DVM, PhD, Dip ACPV
 Center for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Diseases
 College of Veterinary Medicine
 Virginia Tech
 Blacksburg, VA 24061-0342

Reviewed by: Benjamin Beale, Extension Agent; Buddy Bowling, MDA; Eddie Johnson, Extension Agent;
 Mike Bell, Extension Agent; Liz Bills, MDA; Fraser Owen, APHIS 3/06