



# Animal Health & Biosecurity

PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S INTERESTS

CONSULTATION PAPER



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Making it work together

# **ANIMAL HEALTH AND BIOSECURITY**

## **PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S INTERESTS**

A Code of Recommendations for Farmers, Recreational  
Users and Utility Workers  
**Consultation Paper**

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Scottish Executive  
Environment and Rural Affairs Department  
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# **Animal Health and Biosecurity Protecting Scotland's Interests**

## **Part I Advice for farmers and other owners of farm animals**

### **Introduction**

- 1 Biosecurity is the responsibility of everybody – it means ways in which farmers, other owners of farm animals, and people who live, work, visit and enjoy the countryside can significantly reduce the risk of spreading disease in animals.
- 2 Animal disease
  - harms the welfare of animals
  - disrupts farming and rural businesses
  - costs livestock owners money
  - prevents produce going to market in peak condition
  - can lead to the loss of export markets
  - causes stress and anxiety to animal owners and others
- 3 Everybody gains by following these biosecurity precautions – farmers, related farming and rural industries and Scotland as a whole.
- 4 It is important to apply the biosecurity precautions whether as a commercial livestock farmer or someone who keeps a farm animal as a pet. Advice in this Code will not apply to all situations, but the principles of good biosecurity are vital to the health and survival of animals and rural businesses. Biosecurity is an important feature of Farm Assurance Standards/Schemes.
- 5 Speak to your vet or other professional advisers today so that you can draw up your own Biosecurity Plan.

### **How is disease spread?**

- 6 Most animal diseases are caused by bacteria or viruses that spread by
  - mother to offspring
  - direct contact with infected animals
  - eating or drinking contaminated food or water
  - grazing on contaminated pastures
  - breathing air contaminated by infected animals
  - vermin, encouraged by vegetation and sources of food around farm buildings
  - animals to humans and/or their vehicles that then act as carriers
- 7 Dirty transport vehicles pose a high risk of introducing infection. Any vehicle/trailer could carry disease from farm to farm, or to market. Mud, manure, slurry, bedding or feedstuffs can carry the disease agents and may be picked up by vehicles, on footwear, clothing or equipment and transferred to other animals.

## Planning to avoid disease

### 8 Hygiene

Good hygiene requires constant effort by all who deal with farm animals. The following should be key elements of any Biosecurity Plan:

### 9 People

- signpost the farm as this can be important if a disease outbreak occurs
- display notices directing callers to the farmhouse or farm office
- avoid contact between vehicles and livestock
- avoid wearing dirty work clothes or footwear off the farm, particularly when going to a market
- discourage anyone coming onto your farm with dirty clothes or footwear
- provide cleaning and disinfectant materials for all visitors/workers and consider offering protective clothing/footwear
- do not let visitors enter buildings where animals are kept or touch livestock or feedstuffs
- wash hands after close contact with any farm animal
- train staff in the principles of hygiene and disease security

### 10 Buildings, equipment and vehicles

- clean and disinfect buildings after use by livestock
- clean and disinfect all shared and hired equipment after use and before moving off farm
- clean and disinfect vehicles, including trailers, if exposed to other farms' animals

11 There is a legal duty to clean and disinfect vehicles after transporting animals. The rules are slightly different depending on whether transport is within the farm business – *The Transport of Animals (Cleansing and Disinfection) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/167)*. Different diseases require different disinfectants at different strengths. Use the appropriate DEFRA approved disinfectant.

12 Hygiene is crucial to prevent disease. Remember that disinfectant is ineffective if dirt is present, therefore thorough cleaning is necessary before disinfectant is applied.

### 13 Farm management

These are some basic principles to reduce the risk of disease

- have stock proof boundaries
- check boundaries regularly
- minimise nose to nose contact with neighbouring stock
- if common grazings are used try to isolate incoming stock before turning them onto common grazings
- prevent animals straying on roads, a legal duty outlined in the *Roads (Scotland) Act 1984*

- . at the first sign of illness isolate sick animals, with the dam if appropriate, and check all the other animals in the herd/flock etc

### **New animals to farm**

- 14 It is important to realise that the entry of any animal onto a farm is a disease risk. Replacements should preferably be bred within the farm. However, where it is necessary to add new stock it is advisable to
- . obtain new animals from a single source
  - . obtain information on the recent history of the flock/herd and what treatments/vaccinations the animals received. Questions to ask, for example, are – when was the animal last tested for TB or brucellosis; are they registered under the National Scrapie Plan?
  - . worm animals on arrival
  - . keep new livestock separate for 20 days in an isolation facility – *The Disease Control (Interim Measures) (Scotland) Order 2002 (SI 2002/34)*

### **High risk activities**

- 15 The use of hired bulls/rams/billy goats is a high risk activity. Introducing foster animals from another farm is also a high risk activity. These animals should be isolated and checked by a vet.

### **Feed and water**

- 16 Various diseases can be spread by contaminated feed and water. The following list is not exhaustive but there are known disease links with
- . salmonella
  - . leptospirosis
  - . toxoplasmosis abortion
  - . tuberculosis
  - . foot and mouth disease
  - . cryptosporidiosis
- 17 Swill feeding was banned by *The Animal By-Products Amendment (Scotland) Order 2001 (SI 2001/171)*.

### **Slurry and manure**

- 18 Infections can survive in slurry and manure. Current accepted best practice is
- . store for at least 6 months before use
  - . spread on arable land rather than grass for conservation, and avoid land for grazing if you can
  - . spread slurry using an inverted spreading plate
  - . avoid using hired/shared spreaders if possible. However, if sharing is unavoidable ensure spreaders are thoroughly cleaned

- 19 The PEPFAA Code (Prevention of Environmental Pollution From Agricultural Activity) is the acknowledged source of information on spreading of farm wastes. Spreading of sewage sludge is also regulated by law – *The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1263)*.

### **Wildlife**

- 20 Wild animals and birds can spread disease. Best practice to prevent infection from wildlife includes
- keep farmyard and surroundings clean and tidy to discourage vermin
  - ensure there is an active rodent control system
  - keep feedstock buildings in good repair so that animals and birds cannot gain access
  - keep doors and windows shut if there is no need for ventilation
  - net windows, baffles and drains and monitor these areas regularly

### **Records and traceability**

- 21 There are legal requirements for the registration of all livestock and premises, animal identification and stock records. These requirements are important for a number of reasons including traceability and disease control.
- 22 Keepers of cattle, sheep, pigs and goats must be registered and their animals identified in accordance with the law, even if only one animal is kept – *The Cattle (Identification of Older Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/1)*; *The Cattle Identification Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/871)*; *The Sheep and Goats Identification (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/418)*; *The Sheep and Goats Identification (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/39)*; *The Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) Order 1995 (SI 1995/11)*.
- 23 In the event of disease being confirmed it would assist veterinary investigations to keep a list of visitors and deliveries.

### **Animal medicines**

- 24 The use of unlicensed veterinary medicines is not permitted by *The Marketing Authorisations for Veterinary Medicinal Products Regulations 1994 (SI 1994/3142)*.
- 25 Farmers or keepers of farm animals are required to keep a record of veterinary medicines used in accordance with *The Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations 1997 (SI 1997/1729)*.

### **Notifiable disease**

- 26 At the first sign or suspicion of a notifiable disease contact your vet immediately. There is a legal duty in this circumstance to contact the Duty Vet at your local Animal Health Divisional Office. An on-call 24-hour service is provided for emergencies.

### **Your legal obligations**

- 27 This code contains sections which are legally enforceable. The legislation referred to in italics throughout the document is not part of the code but is intended to highlight some of the legal requirements. The law, as quoted in italics, is that in force on the date of publication or reprinting of the code. Readers should be aware that any of the legal requirements quoted might be subject to change – they should seek confirmation before assuming that these are an accurate statement of the law currently in force.

### **Where Can I Get Further Advice?**

- 28 Biosecurity advice can be obtained from your local vet or Animal Health Divisional Office. [A biosecurity related website is planned by the Executive.]

## **Part II Advice for recreational users of farm land**

- 29 Potential visitors to farm properties and/or properties where farm animals are kept need to be aware of their role in helping the community combat the transmission of animal diseases.
- 30 Visitors should follow these precautions
- . start the walk wearing clean footwear and clothing
  - . avoid all contact with farm animals
  - . do not feed animals (even with left over sandwiches)
  - . keep dogs under control
  - . use disinfectant footpads or baths where provided
- 31 [Comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which will be subject to approval by the Scottish Parliament.]

## Part III Advice for utility workers

32. Potential visitors to farm properties and/or properties where farm animals are kept need to be aware of their role in helping the community combat the transmission of animal diseases.
- 33 Follow these precautions
  - contact the farmer first to arrange the visit
  - respect any signposting and ensure gates and doors are left as they are found
  - avoid contact between vehicles and livestock
  - avoid all contact with animals
  - do not feed animals (even with left over sandwiches)
  - if visiting any farm ensure clothes are not muddy and boots have been cleaned and disinfected

# **Animal Health and Biosecurity Protecting Scotland's Interests**

Draft Code of Recommendations on Biosecurity  
Consultation Response Form

Part I of draft Code

Part II of draft Code

Part III of draft Code

General comments

Please cut off and send your comments to Karly McGill, Scottish Executive, Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Animal Health Branch, Room 356, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh, EH14 1TY (e-mail: [Karly.mcgill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Karly.mcgill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)) **by no later than Friday, 7 June 2002.**

For further information please contact  
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