

Biosecurity Basics

The pork industry uses the word “biosecurity” to refer to everything from isolating animals before they join a herd and using clean and protective clothing, to decontaminating outside objects entering a farm and restricting movement of people and equipment.

Biosecurity encompasses all measures used to protect a livestock herd against the introduction or spread of disease. These measures are important to protect animal health, human health, and food safety.

Why the closed-door policy?

It’s natural that people want to visit a barn, but they can carry disease in and on their bodies (respiratory, flu, in saliva or other bodily fluids). People spread disease when they fail to wash their hands or fail to shower into a barn. Disease also travels on vehicles, clothing, boots, tools, and farm equipment. Most biosecurity programs recommend establishing a single entrance to the main barn equipped with a lock and doorbell to protect against the risk of uninvited visitors. People can track disease-causing microbes on their boots and from their vehicles if they don’t use boot baths, or wash their vehicles before visiting a farm.

Recommendations for **farms**:

- Supply all visitors with clean boots, coveralls or barn clothes and dust masks during their visit, and wear barn boots only in the barn yourself.
- Be aware of a visitor’s health status and pass on any concerns about a visitor’s health to the farm’s swine veterinarian.
- Ask for information on any contact between a visitor and farm animals within the last 30 days. Determine your own manageable risk before granting a visitor entry.
- Use foot baths, wash hands, and take a shower in the barn before entering and exiting.
- Be aware of vehicles that enter the farm site, and comply with the farm’s biosecurity requirements. This may mean that a vehicle that has visited another farm may not be allowed onto the farm site, or it may have to be parked a certain distance away.
- Be aware of your animals’ health status.

Recommendations for **visitors**:

- Comply with the farm’s biosecurity requirements.
- Wear barn clothing and boots only in the barn, and never wear outside clothing or footwear in the barn.
- Prior to visiting a farm, describe to the farm manager any contact with farm animals within the last 30 days.
- Use foot baths, wash hands, and take a shower at the farm.