

## » **Biosecurity**

Almost everyone has heard the old saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” But it is often forgotten that prevention requires a plan, and the most basic prevention plan starts with biosecurity. Biosecurity refers to management measures taken to prevent disease agents from being introduced to animal populations or between groups if the farm is large. Biosecurity has three main components. These are: 1) isolation; 2) traffic control; and 3) sanitation.

**ISOLATION** | The most common way that new diseases are introduced into a flock is through new animal additions. New arrivals and animals returning from exhibitions should be isolated from resident animals for at least 30 to 60 days to allow for incubation times of certain diseases. During the isolation period, animals should be observed closely, and they can be tested for specific diseases of concern (e.g. *Brucella ovis*, OPP virus) if not done pre-purchase. New arrivals should not be allowed to graze pastures until they have been tested and proven to be free of dewormer-resistant worms. Your veterinarian can assist you with determining this. It is best to use a “closed” or “high health” flock as the source for flock additions when possible.


**TRAFFIC CONTROL** | Don’t carry diseases from your place to someone else’s place on your clothing or vehicles. Avoid unnecessary animal contact when visiting other livestock facilities. Change coveralls or clothes between farm visits. Either clean and disinfect your boots before entering and when leaving another livestock premises or wear disposable plastic boot covers. Dispose of plastic boots at the farm when the visit is finished.

Don’t allow visitors to enter pens or feed alleys, or touch animals unless necessary. Provide visitors with protective coveralls and dispos-

able boots or make thorough boot washing and disinfection required before and after the visit. Livestock haulers, feed-delivery trucks and others should be allowed limited access and should be held to strict sanitation standards. Shearing crews should sanitize their equipment between flocks and wear freshly laundered clothing and clean, disinfected footwear.

**SANITATION/HUSBANDRY** | Clean all equipment that will be used with multiple groups of animals. Thorough cleaning removes 99 percent of germs, and appropriate disinfectants can reduce risk further if needed. Promptly remove and appropriately dispose of dead animals or animal tissues such as the afterbirth at lambing time. Rodent and insect control assists in preventing the spread of disease.

When developing a biosecurity plan, farmers and ranchers must take into account how much biosecurity is needed, what it will cost and their ability and commitment to enforce their plan.

**OTHER USEFUL REFERENCES** | Health Chapter, SID Sheep Production Handbook, 2002 Edition and the Sheep Care Guide, 2005 edition. Both of these are published by the American Sheep Industry Association. Veterinary Extension fact sheets on biosecurity at: <http://ohio-line.osu.edu/vme-fact/> Accessed 9-1-11. 

By **WILLIAM SHULAW, DVM**  
Extension Veterinarian, Ohio State University