



## Healthy animals – Biosecurity and the beef industry

### Managing animal health practices

Healthy animals are more productive and less prone to disease. The activities that contribute to the maintenance of herd health play an important role in disease prevention. The following examples of animal health activities, processes and practices can contribute to the health of the herd and the operation.

#### Work with a veterinarian

Establishing a good working relationship with a veterinarian is important as it will provide them with the background necessary to give advice that is appropriate to the operation.

#### Develop a herd health plan

Creating and implementing a herd health plan in consultation with a veterinarian will allow producers to track and monitor the reproduction, nutrition and genetic characteristics of their herd. Documenting standard patterns or behaviours will help identify potential risks and develop solutions. To be effective, diagnostic tests, vaccines and medications must be selected and used appropriately.

#### Source safe and reliable resources

Most farm inputs (feed, water, medications, new stock) contribute to the health of the animals on farm. However, inputs can also directly or indirectly contribute to the introduction or spread of disease. When storing feed, minimize access by cattle, wildlife, and pests and use feed on a “first in, first out” basis. Vaccines and medications must be stored and used according to the manufacturer’s recommendations and as directed by your veterinarian. Obtain inputs from safe and reliable sources to minimize this risk.

There are circumstances, however, in which the safety, reliability, or efficacy of certain inputs may be beyond a producer’s control. For example, water may be contaminated by wildlife or other factors, on either a regular seasonal basis or as a result of a specific event. Producers should observe and be aware of these



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situations and the resulting risk. Producers can then choose to manage the resultant risk through a range of practices that may include alternate sourcing of inputs, increased monitoring, and vaccination.

#### Learn more about biosecurity

The Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard outlines activities that can help reduce the risk of disease on-farm. The standard was developed over two years, in consultation with producers, industry associations, academia, and provincial governments through funding provided by the Growing Forward policy initiative of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. It was designed specifically for the Canadian beef cattle industry, and is applicable to farm-level operations of all types and sizes.

**For more information**

These are just a few of the recognized biosecurity practices that producers can use to manage the disease risks on their operation. For more information on biosecurity, or to obtain a copy of the Canadian Beef Cattle On-Farm Biosecurity Standard, please visit: [www.inspection.gc.ca/biosecurity](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/biosecurity).