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How to prevent the introduction and spread of animal and bird disease by following good hygiene and biosecurity standards. The action you take on your farm is vital in stopping the introduction and spread of animal diseases in the Country. You must practise good biosecurity measures at all times. Disease may not always be apparent especially in the early stages and there are many ways disease can be introduced and spread. Farm animal and bird diseases are mainly spread through:

- animals moving between and within farms and, in particular, the introduction of new animals;
- direct or close contact with neighbours' animals;
- sharing vehicles, machinery, equipment, feed and bedding between farms;
- movement of people, especially workers, between and within farms;
- farm visitors – people, pets, equipment and vehicles;
- contamination by wildlife, vermin and wild birds;
- Animals drinking from contaminated rivers and streams; some animal diseases such as bluetongue are only spread by insects or contaminated veterinary equipment. Some diseases are zoonotic, which means they can be transmitted between humans and animals, and so good biosecurity can also reduce the risk of disease exposure to your workers and members of the public who visit your farm. Biosecurity measures You should take the following steps to prevent disease:
- don't bring infection onto your farm, or spread it around your farm, on your clothes, footwear or hands;
- where possible, limit and control farm visitors – people and vehicles;
- keep farm access routes, parking areas, yards, feeding and storage areas clean and tidy;
- have pressure washers, brushes, hoses, water and disinfectant available, and make sure visitors use them;
- don't allow contact with neighbours' livestock and maintain your fences;

- don't share injecting and dosing equipment – if it can't be avoided, cleanse and disinfect thoroughly;
- clean and then disinfect any farm machinery/equipment if you are sharing these with a neighbouring farm;
- introduce a pest control programme;
- supply clean fresh drinking water in troughs;
- keep livestock away from freshly spread slurry;
- ensure your livestock identification and record keeping is accurate and up-to-date;
- dispose of fallen stock (dead animals) properly taking them to the incineration plant as per C.R. 1069/2009;
- make a herd/flock health plan with your vet including isolation for new or returning stock;
- know the health status of any animals or birds you are buying or moving;
- be vigilant to spot any signs of disease among your animals or birds, and report suspicions of notifiable disease to the Veterinary Regulation Directorate (VRD) as soon as possible; Staff and visitors • train staff on the principles of hygiene and disease security
- include signs directing visitors to the farmhouse/office and urging visitors not to feed animals or get in close contact
- reduce the number of visitors to your farm - consider having a farm post box at the end of your drive
- where possible a hard standing area away from livestock should be provided for visitors' vehicles
- keep your farmyard and surroundings clean and tidy to discourage vermin
- provide cleaning and disinfectant materials for all visitors and workers
- consider offering protective clothing and footwear - Wellington boots are recommended because they are easy to clean and disinfect
- wash your hands with soap and water after handling livestock
- avoid wearing dirty clothes and footwear off the farm - this is important when visiting markets, shows, farms and other premises where there are livestock; Buildings, equipment and vehicles
- keep vehicles clean inside and out
- clean and disinfect vehicles and trailers (preferably with a power hose);
- pay attention to areas where dirt may be hidden such as wheel arches;
- clean and disinfect all shared and hired equipment before and after use;

- make sure that animals kept indoors have fresh clean dry bedding;
- dispose of used bedding away from livestock, humans and watercourses as it can cause contamination;
- clean and disinfect buildings and equipment after use by livestock;
- safely dispose of used equipment such as disposable clothing and veterinary equipment; Buying new stock or returning your stock to the farm Always know the health status of animals you are buying or moving:
- keep incoming and returning stock separate from the rest of the herd/flock;
- Use separate equipment and staff or handle isolated stock last; keep isolation buildings as near as possible to the farm entrance and separate from other livestock buildings; MIXED SPECIES FARMS – swine and poultry, proper distinction and space between the different housing. There are rules you must follow on identifying, tracing and moving your animals to stop the spread of disease. Feed and water Various diseases can be spread by contaminated feed and water, so to reduce the risk:
- use mains water wherever possible; check any borehole water supply;
- have water bowls or drinkers above the level for faecal contamination;
- clean feed and water troughs regularly;
- keep feed in a clean, dry store;
- keep feed stores covered and shut to ensure no access by dogs, cats, vermin and wildlife;
- dispose of old or soiled feed safely;
- avoid swill feeding which is banned; Slurry management Infections can survive in slurry and manure, so to reduce the risk:
- Spread slurry on arable land rather than grass for silage, in line with in force regulations, on the matter as regulated by the Nitrates Unit, or take it to the Wasteserv for proper treatment.