



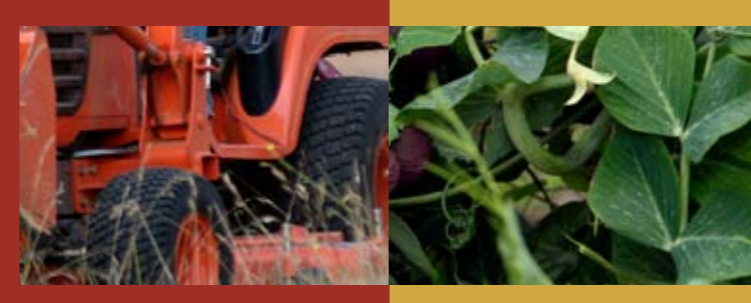
Biosecurity and on-farm workers

As a plant producer you are well aware that protecting your crops and plants from pests and disease goes hand-in-hand with protecting your livelihood.

Having good biosecurity measures in place goes a long way to preventing weed, plant pest or disease incursions on your property. Many producers have already implemented biosecurity systems but those who haven't put your farm and your industry at risk.

>> What is biosecurity?

'Biosecurity' is protecting the economy, environment and people's health from weeds, pests and disease. It includes trying to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving, and helping to control outbreaks when they do occur. While robust response arrangements are in place to combat outbreaks, preventing pest and disease incursions in the first place remains a national priority.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Further information

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's website www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity

Industry Biosecurity Plans can be obtained by contacting Plant Health Australia on ph: **(02) 6260 4322** or visit their website www.planthealthaustralia.com.au

The website www.farmbiosecurity.com.au

vital information

for plant producers





On-farm biosecurity

Biosecurity makes good business sense. Applying good biosecurity measures to your property can be simple and doesn't have to be expensive.

Here are some of the things you can do to protect your property:

- **Know what pests and disease symptoms to look for:**
 - plant death
 - die-back of shoot-tips
 - failure of plants to thrive, such as a reduction in growth or low production
 - low germination rates
 - yellow, black, brown or orange spots on leaves
 - unusual markings or colouration on leaves or fruit
 - leaf curling
 - new weeds

» Report any new weed, plant pest or disease incursion to the national Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

- Check the **origin of material** coming on or going off your property to assess it for the risk of disease or insects.
- **Use certified 'free from pests'** seed or propagation material, and use trusted suppliers.
- Do not bring agricultural equipment onto your property without ensuring it is **clean and free of soil, seeds and other contaminants**.
- **Do not bring in plant material (including seeds) from overseas** without appropriate permits from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, www.aqis.gov.au
- Apply high standards of **personal cleanliness and disinfection** if handling suspect plant material or soil.
- Where possible, create a **'buffer zone'** with your neighbours through measures such as double fencing and wind breaks.
- **Limit visitors** to your plants, crops and livestock.

Itinerant workers and visitors

Itinerant workers (workers from overseas, backpackers and retirees) are heavily employed by fruit growers for picking, packing and pruning. This workforce contributes enormously during harvest season but can also pose a significant biosecurity risk. Being highly mobile and unfamiliar with biosecurity, these workers may carry pests and diseases from other states or regions on equipment, clothes, soil and plant material which could spread rapidly through your crops.

As seen with the 2007-08 equine influenza outbreak, a highly contagious disease can easily be disseminated to new areas via people, their clothing and equipment.

Most workers coming onto your property are unlikely to be aware of biosecurity and may have little concern about protecting your property in this regard.

The following biosecurity tips will help minimise the risk of a weed, pest or disease making it onto your property:

- **Have a designated meeting or arrival area** on your property which is well away from your crop or plants. Consider holding an induction session for new workers that focuses on some simple biosecurity measures.
- Consider providing a **wash-down area for cars** where the wash water can be contained along with any dirt and seeds.
- **Ask visitors or workers to check** that they're not carrying any seeds, grasses or other contaminants on their clothing or in their hair. Footwear is a major risk—**make sure boots are free of soil, mud or seeds**. A footbath with disinfectant should be used.
- Itinerant workers often have their own equipment. Make sure their **equipment is clean and free of any foreign matter** before using it on your plants. Wiping the equipment over with a farm-grade disinfectant is recommended.
- Consider **placing signs or posters in appropriate areas** on your property that will remind people to carry out the above biosecurity measures. Download posters and signs from www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity.
- **Keep a record**. Keep a simple log of who is coming onto your property. Details you should consider recording are: date of arrival and departure, where they came from before working on your property, and where they intend to go next. Contact details such as a mobile phone number are also important. This information is crucial during a pest or disease incursion and can significantly improve the chances of containment and eradication.

What to do if you spot anything unusual

Inspecting your crops and plants regularly for pest and disease symptoms is important.

The early detection and containment of a weed, pest or disease is essential to prevent its spread and assists in the eradication efforts by agriculture authorities.

- **Report** the suspect weed, pest or disease by phoning the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881) or contact your local agriculture department.
- Take reasonable action to **isolate the problem** area and do not touch or disturb the site, to minimise spreading the pest or disease.
- **Describe** the detection site in sufficient detail to allow a person to return to the exact location if necessary. You can **tag or mark the site** with a non-degradable ribbon or flag to assist relocation, or mark the site on a map or sketch a map to identify the detection site.
- Take **note of the symptoms and the plant** upon which you found the pest.
- **Clean any boots, clothes and equipment** that have been used on soil and plant material at the site.

If you are waiting for confirmation of a pest or disease, use the following precautionary measures:

- **Restrict operations in the area** by withdrawing people, vehicles and equipment from the area.
- **Limit access to the area** to agriculture department authorities only.
- **Clean and disinfect your hands, clothing and any equipment** that has been in contact with the affected area.
- **Apply interim control and containment measures** as advised by your agriculture authority.

