

Biosecurity

Preventing the introduction of disease agents is a continuous challenge for pork producers and veterinarians. The problem is compounded when pigs are housed outdoors because producers cannot control pig contact with wildlife, stray animals, rodents, insects, aerosols, and people. This guide will help producers assess and monitor the biosecurity of their farm.

pork
checkoff

Biosecurity Considerations for Pigs Housed Outdoors or with Access to Outdoor Lots

- 1. Isolation.** Even in outdoor units, the greatest risk of disease introduction to a herd is by introducing infected stock. Direct contact between infected and uninfected pigs is the most efficient way to spread disease. Isolation of incoming stock provides a safeguard against such transmission. Isolation allows time for producers to observe new stock for signs of disease before herd entry. Isolation also gives producers the opportunity to test animals for exposure to certain diseases and to acclimate or vaccinate animals against current herd diseases.
- 2. Location.** Aerosol spread of pathogens usually is reported to occur approximately 2 miles around an infected farm. Locating your outdoor unit at least 2 miles from other swine could minimize the risk of infection by natural aerosol transmission.
- 3. Pig Flow.** All-in, all-out pig flow can help prevent transmission of diseases from pig to pig. Although, some pathogens can survive for lengthy periods of time outside of the pig, particularly in cold weather, most pathogens will not survive for very long outdoors because sunlight will dry and inactivate them.
- 4. Pest/Wildlife Control.** Control of birds, wildlife, and rodents is difficult in an outdoor system. However, you can do some things to make your farm less desirable to these creatures. Examples include controlling the vegetation within and surrounding the unit, cleaning up feed spills, discarding debris, and prompt carcass removal. Additionally, eliminating areas with standing water and spraying can lessen the insect population.
- 5. Access deterrents.** People can be discouraged from entering your premises and contacting pigs by posting "No Trespassing" and "No Visitor" signs surrounding the property and on entrance roads. Posting "Please don't feed the pigs" signs on gates can discourage transmission of disease by infected human food. Storage areas for medications, chemicals, etc. should be locked when not in use. A single, gated road that serves as both entrance and exit will discourage unwanted vehicles and visitors from entering the property.
- 6. Feed.** Covering feed bins can prevent tampering.
- 7. Vigilance.** You will not be able to prevent access to people with bad intentions; therefore, it is important to be aware of any signs of entry or tampering:
 - Injection sites on pigs, food wrappers, tire tracks, footprints, and broken equipment indicate trespassers.
 - Frequent pig inventories can detect stolen or added swine.
 - Monitoring for signs of disease can help detect an outbreak early so that it can be quickly contained. Call your veterinarian if you see blisters on the pig's snout, feet, or tongue, or if you observe an unusually high number of pigs with fevers, lameness, off-feed, or with discolored skin. Also, report any unusual death loss.

Securing an outdoor facility is challenging but procedures can be employed that discourage unwanted visitors and pests.