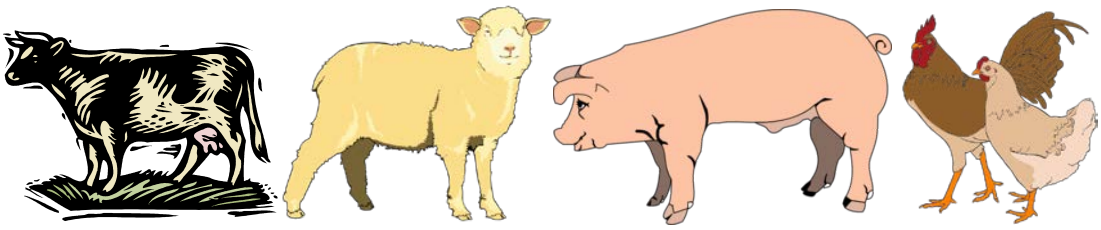
Protect Your Farm Against Antimicrobial Resistance – 15 Ways to Improve your Biosecurity

(Department of Agriculture and the Marine – Guidance on Agri-food and AMR)



Firstly. What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity refers to the preventive measures you can use to keep your livestock free of infectious diseases. Biosecurity practices can be broken down into two categories: actions that can be taken to prevent infectious diseases getting **into** your herd from **outside** the farm and actions that can be taken to reduce infection spread **within** your farm.

Biosecurity is an effective tool to reduce animal antibiotic consumption. Improvements in biosecurity practices mean bacteria get less opportunity to develop resistance and that antibiotics remain effective when needed to treat disease. Research carried out in other European Countries has shown that better biosecurity results in less disease, less antibiotic use and better production results in terms of animal health and welfare, public opinion and farm profitability.

1. **Be aware of all the disease threats from outside your farm (ranked below in decreasing order of importance)**

   (i) Added animals (including animals bought in, or home farm animals who are returned from a mart or a show)
   (ii) Neighbouring animals
   (iii) Farm visitors
   (iv) Animal handling equipment (trailers, etc.)
   (v) Animal products (slurry, milk, colostrum etc.)
   (vi) Wildlife vermin and other animals (see point 12 below)
   (vii) The environment (allowing access to rivers/streams)

2. **Take steps to reduce risks when buying in animals.**

   Step 1 – Plan Ahead
   Step 2 – Buy in as few animals as possible
   Step 3 – Buy in from as few herds as possible
   Step 4 – Select lower risk herds
   Step 5 – Select lower risk animals
   Step 6 – Reduce transport risk
   Step 7 – Implement a quarantine period for 28 days and test for evidence of disease

3. **Thoroughly clean and disinfect of all animal housing and equipment before and after use.**

4. **Ensure all farm visitors disinfect themselves on arrival (at farm entrance).**
   Provide protective clothing and footwear for visitors to wear.

5. **Ensure all vehicles entering the farm are suitably clean .**

6. **Work with your vet.**
   Building a relationship with your veterinary practitioner is important to ensure that they are involved in preventing diseases on farm as well as treating outbreaks. Your veterinary practitioner is best placed to devise a biosecurity plan suited to your farm, which should be reviewed annually.

7. **Implement an 'all in, all-out' policy.**
   This is an important management strategy to minimise introduction or spread of disease amongst different age groups of animals or cohorts.

8. **Reduce your stocking density.**
   Where possible reduce your stocking density to help minimise stress on animals and potential spread of infectious disease.

9. **Have a vaccination plan.**

10. **Diagnose and treat sick animals promptly.**

11. **Isolate or remove sick animals from the herd.**

12. **Prevent vermin accessing feed and bedding**
    Birds and vermin carry a wide range of pathogens including various strains of E.coli and Salmonella. All practical reasonable precautions should be taken to prevent bird/vermin access to animals feed and bedding.

13. **Regularly empty and clean feed and water troughs.**

14. **Ensure water supply does not get contaminated at any point.**

15. **Compost manure and store slurry**.
    The longer that manure is allowed to compost and slurry is stored the lower the risk of disease transmission.

16. **Use Your Records.**
    Keeping good records is essential to track changes in herd health over time. Records are particularly important with subclinical (before definite symptoms can be identified) infections as you may see poor performance before clinical signs of disease.

Important: Some of the information above has been extracted from a number of comprehensive leaflets produced by Animal Health Ireland. It is not an exhaustive list and more details in relation to the advice given above can be found on the biosecurity section of the Animal Health Ireland website at www.animalhealthireland.ie as well as the Teagasc website at www.teagasc.ie.