

Dr. Gary Anderson, Animal and Bioscience Specialist from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, spoke about Biosecurity Measures to the members of the Maine Alpaca Association on June 10, 2017 during our general membership meeting.

Here is a brief synopsis of his information. For slides on the entire presentation, please visit our website www.mainealpacaassociation.com

What is Biosecurity defined?

Biosecurity is a collection of management practices that protect your farm from infectious organisms from entering your farm and if an infectious organism enters your farm, reducing its spread within your farm.

Why use biosecurity measures? Infectious diseases cost producers production and profit losses.

Using a preventive approach to herd health ensures a healthy farm. It reduces the risk of the herd contracting or spreading diseases. Build barriers to keep your herd healthy. Keep out dangerous organisms.

Special care should be taken when you have visitors to your farm. Maine Open Farm Days is July 23, 2017. The following measures can be taken to help keep your animals safe when visitors are welcomed.

Dr. Anderson suggests that you can divide your farm into 3 areas. Each would have different biosecurity measures:

Area open to Visitors: This could be a farm storefront you maintain on the farm with animal views. People can see your animals, but they are not close. They cannot touch animals and don't have access to their feed. Biosecurity would be minimal requiring clean clothes/shoes.

Close proximity to Animals: People can get close to the fence line of your animals. You want to make sure people don't bring in any foreign organisms so this may require a footbath (wash dirty, manure footwear followed by a 2nd disinfecting bath) and/or disposable plastic boots. Hand washing/hand sanitizer should be available to all that enter your farm having close contact with the animals. Eliminate access of visitors to feed of animals will reduce chance of contaminating your alpacas feed.

Close contact with your Animals: such as performing management protocols on your animals. This kind of contact requires the highest level of biosecurity. Clean hands, feet, and clothes are recommended to maintain safety. Again use footbath as described earlier and/or plastic disposable boots. Hand washing/hand sanitizer available as well and any instruments being brought on the farm should be cleaned and disinfected prior to use on your alpacas.

Some general guidelines are to use a disinfectant such as Novosan to disinfect shoes and clothes before entering barn. Ask your shearer to disinfect before entering barn. Clean equipment first, then disinfect. Bio-containment practices will help to limit the spread of infectious agents among animals.

Routes of transmission for infectious diseases are:

Inhaled droplets

Ingesting pathogens – fecal, urine

Saliva

Contaminated feed or water

Physical contact

Transfer from inanimate objects

Insect transfer - *TICKS*

WASH HANDS!

A virus can affect the air if you have a sick animal. Remove the sick animal from the general herd and isolate!

What we do to secure our farms:

Isolation – minimize exposure

Resistance – vaccination

Test new animals first before bringing into general herd

Screen potential purchases

Quarantine new animals – 1 month

No shared fence line, equipment with new animals

Do not use common equipment with new animals

Sound nutrition

Up to date vaccinations

Judicious use of drugs

Clean, sanitize

Moldy food can kill!

Disinfect clothes and shoes

Restrict visitor access to feed and animal treading areas

Provide disposable foot covering for any visitors or sanitizing pad for non-manure shoes

Deliveries should also be monitored before entering area

1 gram of feces can have 10B virus cells or 100M salmonella cells

Reduce exposure paths to diseases

Monitor clean water and feed