

Consultation on Biosecurity Guidance

The Royal Agricultural Society of England is the organiser of the largest agricultural show in Europe. The Royal Show attracts farm livestock entries of up to 1800 sheep, 1400 cattle and 400 pigs. Since the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001 the Show has been required to abide by strict biosecurity measures in order to have a gathering of animals at the Show.

The biosecurity measures for 2003 place the emphasis of cleanliness on those tending the animals, with the visiting public being free from any restrictions or requirements regarding biosecurity. In the context of a temporary animal gathering the RASE feels that current requirements are adequate.

Comment on the proposed guidelines contained in Annex A

1. Many farm visits are via an appointment, however some inspection agencies and statutory bodies reserve the right to arrive on farm unannounced. During busy periods such as silage making or harvest there will be a large number of unannounced visits made to the farm.
2. Whilst it is desirable for vehicles to be parked away from livestock, in the case of vehicles such as livestock transporters or delivery vehicles there is a requirement to be in close proximity to areas where livestock have access
3. During periods such as muck spreading or silage making it would be impossible and impractical to remove all visible contamination.
4. In reality a tradesperson visiting a farm is not going to enquire as to the facilities available for disinfecting vehicles and footwear. Many people that travel from farm to farm such as milk tankers, postmen and refuse collectors will be reluctant to disinfect between farms because of the time taken to complete the operation and the damage to vehicles and the environment through constant disinfectant use.
5. Whilst protective clothing can be recommended, for contractors such as shearers it's use is impractical and therefore cannot be insisted upon.
6. The recommended clothing is acceptable
7. A stipulation that all equipment must be clean on entry and departure is not practical. A contractor or engineer arriving with a large amount of tools and equipment may not know what he is going to use until he is actively engaged in the task. It would seem impractical to clean equipment that has not come into contact with animal excreta.
8. If farmers and their families are engaging in activities that encourage members of the public onto their farms (such as farm tourism and bed and breakfast), then the attraction to the public is to be in close proximity to and, in certain circumstances, to be able to handle farm animals. Any disease risk can be reduced by using current guidelines regarding the washing of hands after being in contact with livestock.

Annex B

The proposed measures are acceptable

Annex C

The proposed measures are acceptable

Royal Agricultural Society of England
15th May 2003