BioSecure
Enhanced and cost-effective biosecurity in livestock production

PRACTICE ABSTRACT # 37

New data on existing biosecurity measures across species, production systems, and countries

Information on biosecurity practices in various country-animal production combinations is lacking. Therefore, new data was collected from seven European countries: Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Spain, and the Netherlands. Our goal was to transform the findings of this study into clear and actionable recommendations that stakeholders can confidently implement to improve farm biosecurity.

Data collection

A short questionnaire on biosecurity supporting measures was developed by BIOSECURE consortium partners and used for interviewing farmers on participating farms. Biosecurity data were collected using existing and newly developed Biocheck.Ugent scoring systems, and the results were compared with available data in the Biocheck.Ugent database. The level of implementation of biosecurity measures was collected on 399 farms. Supporting measures available on 390 of these farms included hygiene protocols, management checklists, clear on-farm signage, advisory or coaching sessions, regular staff training, and, in some regions, mandatory biosecurity requirements or guidelines.

Results

The results of this study indicate that overall biosecurity levels in conventional pig and poultry production systems scored the highest, with lower scores found in backyard and small ruminant farms. This is in line with existing literature, where the highest levels of biosecurity are found in intensive poultry and pig production, and the lowest levels of biosecurity are found in small ruminant farms.

Practical recommendations

- Advisors and government/animal health organisations are the best-suited groups to distribute the latest knowledge on biosecurity and to increase the chances that the information reaches the farmers and farm managers.
- Professional magazines are important sources of information for farmers, so (digital) press should not be overlooked when informing stakeholders. For more in-depth sharing of knowledge and information, coaching and training sessions might be valuable to increase the implementation of on-farm biosecurity.



Applying biosecurity measures on livestock farms is an essential aspect of good animal farming and the foundation of any disease control programme.

Establishing mandatory biosecurity measures can significantly improve the overall level of biosecurity. Therefore, governmental and animal health organisations should promote a shift towards more preventive measures by establishing clear rules or guidelines – and by providing supporting measures.

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