



Biosecurity training of New England swine farmers concerning visitors: changing perceptions and behavior

Carol Delaney M.S., and Carolyn Hurwitz DVM, Animal Health Program, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry



Introduction

Swine farmers in New England commonly allow visitors onto their farms and permit interaction with their livestock. While good for sales, the risk of animal disease exposure or transmission is often unrecognized. Farmer education on biosecurity measures can mitigate these risks.

Materials and methods

- Ten swine farmers in Maine and New Hampshire participated in a study that was comprised of
- 2-hour webinar training on biosecurity practices specific to small, outdoor swine units
 - Farm visits for biosecurity practice evaluation and feedback
 - Site specific biosecurity plan development
 - Participant surveys pre and post

Acknowledgments

Funded by a grant from USDA/NIFA Northeast SARE, ONE20-364. Biosecurity Preparedness, Infectious Disease Prevention, and Farmer Training on Northern New England Swine Farms



Results

PRE-PROJECT SURVEY

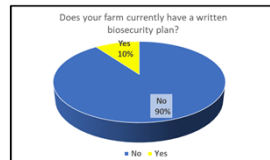
MAJORITY ALLOW VISITORS WITH ANIMAL CONTACT

- 80% allow visitors into pig housing;
- 70% allow visitor contact with pigs.
- 70% do not require footwear wash
- 50% ask visitors to wash hands before
- 60% ask visitors to site recent pig contact

RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS

- Researchers noticed little on-farm signage to inform visitors of restricted areas
- On-farm discussion with researchers included possible disease transmission risk when visitors mingle with livestock

WRITTEN BIOSECURITY PLANS INCREASED AFTER STUDY BUT STILL A MINORITY



TRAINING

1 YEAR POST-PROJECT SURVEY

50% OF FARMERS NOW PERCEIVE HAVING VISITORS A CONCERN

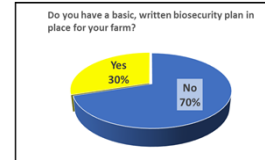
Practice	Your farm's biggest biosecurity weakness
Visitors	Lots of farm visitors
	Openness to visitors
	Other friends come to visit the animals with their friends who have animals at the farm.
	Visitors
	Visitors and staff not taking cleanliness seriously around pigs.

30 - 40% FARMERS ADD NEW WAYS TO SAFEGUARD HAVING VISITORS

Practice	YES: A NEW PRACTICE	NO BUT WILL IMPLEMENT THIS YEAR	TOTAL CHANGE
On-farm signage to inform visitors of protocol	10%	30%	40%
Visitor protocol that assesses visitor risk	20%	10%	30%
Visitor protocol that limits direct contact with pigs	20%	10%	30%

TRAINING

TRAINING



Conclusions

- Training followed by customized on-farm evaluation influenced farmer risk perception and management behavior
- Most implementable agritourism biosecurity actions farmers chose:

1. Adding visitor signage
2. Assessing visitor risk
3. Limiting visitor contact with livestock

Next steps

- More follow-up with one-on-one guidance requested to create written biosecurity plans and implement safer practices

Resources developed

- Signage
- Checklist for having visitors
- Biosecurity webpage

