GM_130_403_H, HOMELAND SECURITY/CRISIS RESPONSIBILITIES

PART 403 – HOMELAND SECURITY/CRISIS RESPONSIBILITIES

SUBPART H – BIOSECURITY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

403.80 Purpose

To provide policy for all NRCS employees on implementing proper biosecurity measures.

403.81 General

The threat of infectious animal diseases, such as foot and mouth and Johne's disease, to the Nation's food supply is real. This threat is a national concern requiring the cooperative involvement of many USDA agencies and partners.

403.82 Background

The National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC) have issued guidelines for all USDA employees to follow to minimize the risk and to prevent the spread of infectious diseases from livestock and poultry. The NFAC also provides coordination of USDA's biosecurity activities among all department agencies, with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) taking the lead and providing technical guidance. This information is maintained on the APHIS Web site (

www.aphis.usda.gov
), which can be accessed through the USDA homepage.

403.83 Authorities

This policy is based on and addresses the following authorities:

The Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 USC App. 2061 et seq).

Executive Order 12656 – Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities

403.84 Policy

(a) During periods of outbreak of infectious animal diseases, NRCS employees shall not enter affected areas for normal planning and implementation purposes. Entry to those areas shall only be made in response to a request from the State Veterinarian or other responsible official in order to provide guidance and assistance for mortality disposal. In those situations, biosecurity measures as directed by the responsible official shall be followed.

(b) NRCS employees will adhere to Level 1 biosecurity measures at all times or more stringent measures that farmers/ ranchers or owners/producers may have in place. During periods of heightened concern for infectious animal disease, additional procedures outlined in Levels 2 and 3 below may be implemented as recommended by APHIS and the State Veterinarian.

(1) Level 1

Visits to farms/ranches that entail office or home visits only:

(i) Avoid livestock area, pens, barns, etc., unless it is necessary to complete the goal of a visit.

(ii) Park vehicles on paved or concrete areas, away from production sites on farms, to avoid contact with dirt, mud or manure.

(iii) Wash hands with soap and water or an antibacterial gel before entering and after leaving the premises to avoid transmitting disease agents from person to person.

(2) Level 2

Visits to farms/ranches where minimal contact with livestock/poultry or their housing (barns, pens, hutches, etc) is unavoidable to attain the goal of the visit:

(i) Park vehicles on paved or concrete areas, away from production sites on farms, to avoid contact with dirt, mud or manure.

(ii) Put on clean rubber or new plastic boots upon exiting the vehicle.

(iii) Wash hands with soap and water or an antibacterial gel before entering and after leaving the premises to avoid transmitting disease agents from person to person.

(iv) After returning to vehicle, clean and disinfect any equipment used with a brush and approved EPA disinfectant solution (Virkon-S Oxonia Active/Oxycept 333).

(v) Clean rubber boots with an approved EPA disinfectant diluted with water. Scrub the bottom of the boot with a brush to remove all dirt or debris. Dispose of disinfectant solution according to the label. Do not discard unused disinfectant on the ground.

(vi) If wearing plastic boots, place them in a plastic bag and leave it on the premises for the owner/producer to dispose of them or place them in a designated “dirty” area of your vehicle.

(3) Level 3

Visits to farms/ranches where there will be close contact with livestock/poultry (walking through narrowly confined pens/lots where animals are within reach or actually handling/inspecting the animals):

(i) Pre-plan the needed supplies and clothing for daily visits including, but not limited to, coveralls (cloth or Tyvex); boots (rubber or disposable plastic); latex exam; large water container; EPA approved disinfectant – Virkon-S Oxonia Active/Oxycept 333; long-handled brush; trash bags; paper towels; spray bottle w/water; liquid and/or gel antibacterial soap; and bucket/pail.

(ii) Park vehicles on paved or concrete areas, away from production sites on farms, to avoid contact with dirt, mud or manure.

(iii) Put on a pair of clean coveralls for each visit.

(iv) Put on clean rubber or new plastic boots upon exiting the vehicle.

(v) Designate a “clean” area in your vehicle to place clean equipment and boots.

(vi) Designate a “dirty” area in your vehicle for clothing and equipment that has been used on the farm.

(vii) Wash hands with soap and water or an antibacterial gel before entering and after leaving the premises to avoid transmitting disease agents from person to person.

(viii) After returning to vehicle, clean and disinfect any equipment used with a brush and approved EPA disinfectant solution (Virkon-S Oxonia Active/Oxycept 333).

(ix) Clean rubber boots with an approved EPA disinfectant diluted with water. Scrub the bottom of the boot with a brush to remove all dirt or debris. Dispose of disinfectant solution according to the label. Do not discard unused disinfectant on the ground.

(x) If wearing plastic boots, place them in a plastic bag and leave it on the premises for the owner/producer to dispose of them or place them in a designated “dirty” area of your vehicle.

(xi) Remove coveralls so that they are inside out and place them in a garbage bag.

(xii) Place the clean equipment and boots in the designated “clean” area of the vehicle.

(xiii) If the vehicle was not parked on a paved surface, wash vehicle tires and wheel wells to remove dirt and debris at a nearby pressure car wash.

(xiv) At the end of the day, dispose of all plastic bags that contain dirty supplies in a manner that prevents exposure to other livestock.

(xv) Launder all coveralls.

(xvi) Personal hygiene should include shampooing hair and cleaning under fingernails.

403.85 Roles and Responsibilities

(a) The Deputy Chief for Science and Technology is responsible for ensuring that biosecurity measures for infectious diseases are current.

(b) Regional Assistant Chiefs are responsible for ensuring that States and the Pacific Island Areas are familiar with the Agency policy on biosecurity measures.

(c) State Conservationists and the Director, Pacific Islands Areas are responsible for:

(1) Communicating the NRCS policy to all offices and to all State partners.

(2) Providing all NRCS offices with required equipment, materials, and information to implement Homeland Security and biosecurity measures and procedures.

(d) District Conservationists (or designated employees responsible for local management of NRCS resources) are responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that the local staff follows procedures as stated above to prevent the spread of harmful and highly contagious livestock and poultry diseases. Additional information regarding safety and health can be found in Title 360, Personnel, Part 420, Safety & Health Management Program.

(2) Ensuring that the local partners and staff are familiar with the above procedures.

(3) Providing status report to the appropriate line officer of activities and conditions in the area.