



**Practical Biosecurity Programs**  
*Standard Biosecurity Protocol (SBP)*  
**SBP 32**

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## Pasture

1. **Purpose:** To prevent potential pathogen introduction and transmission while livestock are on pasture.
2. **Responsibility:** Farm Manager/Owner
3. **Frequency:** Ongoing
4. **Biosecurity Protocols**
  - 4.1 Pasture area should be clearly defined and properly fenced with a fence that will effectively contain the livestock species to be pastured. See **SBP 30 Fencing** and NSDA document 'Livestock Fencing Guidelines 2013'.
  - 4.2 Design pasture layout to limit contact of your livestock with neighbouring farms. Establish buffer zones along pasture boundaries. These could include crop lands or an area left as a buffer strip between the pasture and woodland boundaries (Picture 32.1).



Picture 32.1, Edgar, 2012



Picture 32.2, Wort, 2009

- 4.3 Fencing areas of woodland in pasture areas provides refuge for livestock species. Beware when using woodland areas that there are some wildlife (deer, etc.) that should have limited contact with domestic livestock. (It is important to consider the need for shade and shelter if required to ensure livestock health and welfare.)

- 4.4 Provide proper livestock drinkers that supply potable water for livestock (Picture 32.2).
- 4.5 Watering areas should be located to provide drainage and a clean and dry area to limit disease spread.
- 4.6 Access to wet areas and wetlands should be restricted to limit disease spread (Picture 32.3). Wet areas in pasture are a link in some parasite life cycles (eg. liver fluke). Contamination of water sources can result in spread of disease and parasites. (eg. Johnes Disease)



Picture 32.3, Wort, 2009



Picture 32.4, Perennia, 2010

- 4.7 Pasture should be designed with an area where the livestock can be gathered and contained for delivery, loading and treatment, and inspection for treatment (Picture 32.4). This area should be strong enough to contain the livestock while they are being handled and treated. Establish an area where livestock can be held on delivery to the pasture so they can adjust to the new environment and get familiar to the fences. (This is particularly important where electric or temporary fences are used, or when livestock unfamiliar with an area are brought to a pasture.)
- 4.8 Livestock must be adequately identified so that they can be observed and tracked on pasture. Animals that are observed with a problem need to be able to be identified when they are gathered or to be caught for appropriate treatment or management.
- 4.9 Livestock should be observed daily while on pasture to ensure that they remain healthy and safe at all times.
- 4.10 Livestock going to or on pasture should be part of a vaccination and parasite control program. This program should be established in consultation with the farm veterinarian. Where ever possible, treatment should be administered before the livestock are taken to or released on pasture.
- 4.11 Livestock that are compromised should only be pastured in areas where they can be monitored frequently to ensure they are recovering and can be easily treated.
- 4.12 Pasture birthing of livestock should be supervised to ensure that any health or delivery problems can be attended to immediately. Newborn livestock and their mothers are under stress and therefore more susceptible to disease.
- 4.13 Guardian animals on pasture must be healthy and on a proper vaccination and parasite program to ensure their health and to prevent them from spreading disease to the livestock at pasture. Guardian animals can act as a disease vector for the livestock they are supposed to protect. (Picture 32.5)



Picture 32.5

- 4.14 Pastures should be inspected for plants and materials that could be hazardous to the livestock. If a hazard is identified it should be removed or fenced out of the pasture area.
- 4.15 Products applied to pasture should be approved for use on pasture (i.e. fertilizers, pesticides) and applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **5. Biosecurity Deviation Protocols**

- 5.1 When a sick or weakened animal is observed remove from the pasture to a separate area for isolation and treatment.
- 5.2 When mortality of unknown cause occurs, remove livestock from that fenced area until the cause is identified.
- 5.3 When there is inadequate forage for grazing in the pasture remove the livestock to another grazing site/pasture or feed separately in a feeding paddock.

## **6. Biosecurity Records**

- 6.1 Create and maintain diagrams of the farm pastures.
- 6.2 Record the identification numbers of the livestock turned out to pasture and the turnout and removal dates of livestock.
- 6.3 Keep records of any livestock co-mingled with other livestock.