

Is your field research a biosecurity risk?

Research sites and field work are integral to agricultural research, however researchers should be aware of the farm biosecurity risks associated with conducting field research and demonstrations.

Key risks with not implementing biosecurity best practice are:

- introducing an unwanted plant pest to the field site
- spreading pests to other research sites and properties.

Managing these risks by ensuring compliance to good biosecurity practice is simple, safeguarding all involved in conducting and hosting field research.

Pest is a term that covers all insects, mites, snails, nematodes, pathogens (diseases) and weeds that can damage plants or plant products.

Top 5 field research biosecurity tips

1. Employ a 'keep it clean' policy when conducting on-farm research.

Apply this to vehicles, machinery, footwear, clothing, equipment and tools.

- Locate farm wash down facilities and ensure vehicles and equipment are clean before moving to the next property.
- Ensure policies and state quarantine regulations are followed to deal with analysis and disposal of plant matter or soil (particularly if moving material between states).

2. Ensure your 'contractual agreement' with the property owner is detailed.

- Outline the practices that will be employed to safeguard the property
- Ask the owner what they want/expect and how they can assist. For eg.
 - a. Do they have a wash down facility you can use?
 - b. Are there any declared pests, quarantined areas or other issues on the property that may require extra vigilance?
 - c. Are there any specific priority biosecurity requirements such as:
 - is there a farm plan with designated roadways to the site?
 - are there requirements for using the farm's vehicles when visiting the site?
 - is there a designated parking area?
 - what are the procedures for notifying the grower as you enter and leave the site?

3. Ensure compliance by all involved in field research.

- Involvement in determining biosecurity measures to be implemented by staff can assist in understanding the risks and improve compliance.
- Review, evaluate and update existing biosecurity practices/protocols for field work to ensure they remain relevant.





Basic vehicle biosecurity kit

- Stiff brushes and a scraper for cleaning boots and equipment
- Dustpan and brush
- Rubber boots or boot covers or spare pair of boots instead
- Disposable gloves
- Plastic tray and/or a bucket (for use as a footbath and to clean equipment)
- Detergent or disinfectant (sufficient amount for cleaning equipment and boots)
- Hand sanitiser or hand wash
- Strong plastic bags for disposable items/dirty clothing/shoes
- 5 L water.

Other items for a more advanced biosecurity kit

- Small hand sprayer with methylated spirits or ethanol (70%)
- Flagging tape and pegs to mark location of a suspect new pest
- Plastic sample bags and permanent markers to collect samples
- Sample jars and paper bags to collect samples.



4. Consider the location of your field site.

- Try and locate it near an access road to reduce the need for on-site vehicle movement. The location is even more important if field demonstrations are associated with a trial.

5. Carry a vehicle biosecurity kit at all times.

- Contents include provisions for keeping hands, equipment and vehicle interior free of pests. Incorporate a foot bath at site access points.

What do you risk by not considering farm biosecurity?

- Reluctance of farmers to participate in trials.
- Introduction of a new pest to an area with associated control and management issues (possibly long term).
- Negative feedback for your organisation.
- Failure to take on responsibility and 'duty of care'.

Become biosecurity aware when conducting research – remember you are at the forefront of good biosecurity practice.

For assistance creating a biosecurity plan, identifying biosecurity risks or sourcing equipment or material to mitigate these risks, contact your State Grains Biosecurity Officer.

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**



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