

Is your field research a biosecurity risk?



Research sites and field work are integral to research: after all, they turn new ideas into new pest, disease and weed management options.

However, as a researcher, you should be aware of the biosecurity risks associated with conducting field research and demonstrations.

The main risks if you do not implement biosecurity measures are:

- introducing an unwanted plant pest, disease or weed to the field site
- spreading pests, diseases or weeds to other research sites and properties.

Top tips for reducing field research biosecurity risks

1. Employ a 'keep it clean' policy when conducting field research

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

Use wash down facilities where provided, but if they are not available, ensure a vehicle wash is used prior to travelling to other sites.

Ensure policies and state quarantine regulations are followed to deal with analysis and disposal of soil, plant or biological material.

2. Ensure compliance by the whole team

Involve staff in determining biosecurity measures to be implemented to assist them in understanding the risks and improve compliance.

Review, evaluate and update existing biosecurity practices/protocols for field work to ensure they remain relevant to the current trial or project.

3. Consider the location of your field sites

Where possible, try to locate field sites near access roads to reduce the need for on-site vehicle movement. The location is even more important if repeat sampling is required or large numbers of people will visit the site.

4. Consider the risks of experimental material

If experimental material has not been treated (e.g. no fungicide on seed) it is important to advise the property owner or relevant authority of the risks of introduction of a new pest or disease.

5. Outline the practices that will be employed to safeguard the site

- Is there a wash down facility you can use?
- Is there a designated parking area?
- Are there any declared pests, diseases or weeds, quarantined areas or other issues at the site?
- When the site is on a farm, check the owners requirements:
 - ◆ Is there a farm plan with designated roadways to the site?
 - ◆ Are there requirements for using the farm's vehicles when visiting the site?
 - ◆ Are there procedures for notifying the grower as you enter and leave the site?

6. Carry a vehicle biosecurity kit at all times

Contents include provisions for keeping hands, clothing, equipment and vehicles free of pests, diseases and weeds. Where possible, incorporate a foot bath at site access points.



Decontaminate clothing, tools and footwear that have been in contact with the suspected exotic organism.

**IF YOU SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL,
CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE**

☎ 1800 084 881



What do you risk by not considering biosecurity?

- introducing a new pest, disease or weed to an area with associated control and management issues and ecological ramifications
- negative feedback for your organisation
- reluctance of farmers and others to host future visits
- failure to take on your responsibility and 'duty of care'.

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility

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

Reporting pests, diseases and weeds

In Australia, any unusual plant pest, disease or weed should be reported immediately to the relevant state or territory agriculture agency through the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline** on **1800 084 881**.

Vehicle biosecurity kit

- stiff brushes and a scraper for cleaning boots and equipment
- dustpan and brush
- rubber boots, boot covers and/or a spare pair of boots
- 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
- small hand sprayer with methylated spirits or ethanol (70%)
- 5 L water
- flagging tape and pegs to mark location of a suspect new pest, disease or weed
- plastic sample bags and permanent markers
- sample jars and paper bags.



Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Use wash down facilities provided by the owner of the property, but if they are not available, ensure a vehicle wash is used prior to travelling to other sites.



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