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# Emergency Biosecurity Kits

*Helping keep farms  
in the green*



**Canada** 

## Being prepared for a biosecurity threat



In the case of the province's hog producers, the three most scary words in their vocabulary right now are African Swine Fever.

The disease has fortunately not been detected in Canada and both industry and governments at all levels are doing their best to keep it that way through enhanced testing, increased border security and research aimed at developing a vaccine.

The disease poses no risk to human health, but one positive case would see Canada shut out of world markets-- a disaster of epic proportions for an industry that exports close to 70 per cent of its product.

As part of the effort to make sure Island producers are prepared should they have to deal with the disease on their farms, Dr. Jill Wood has been working with industry to develop emergency biosecurity kits. While the provincial veterinarian is a strong supporter of the efforts to keep Canada and PEI free of the disease she is also a firm believer in being prepared in the event the disease finds its way to our shores.

Dr. Wood explained there was considerable interest during several meetings she had with industry about having a biosecurity kit prepared. With funding help from the federal and provincial governments under the Canadian

Agricultural Partnership, 25 emergency biosecurity kits have been assembled to be put into action at a moment's notice.

"The idea is to very quickly supply these kits to farmers in a needed area around a threat," Dr. Wood said.

The kits contain such things as disposable coveralls, Virkon (a disinfectant that can be applied on virtually all surfaces), protective gloves and booties, a boot brush, hand sanitizer, tape to quarantine off the farm, N95 masks, biosecurity signs, garbage bags, a 17 litre plastic tote and a log book to keep track of visitors.

*“The idea is to very quickly supply these kits to farmers in a needed area around a threat.” - Dr. Jill Wood*

While producers may have some of the items in the kit and use them as part of their biosecurity protocols as a matter of course, the kit is designed for cases when extra measures are called for.

"Even if you do have relatively high biosecurity measures, you wouldn't routinely be blocking your driveway with a sawhorse and big biosecurity sign or quarantine tape," she said.

Dr. Wood noted the kits aren't big and they are designed to help a producer at the beginning of an outbreak by alerting them to the items they should be using and giving them a couple of days head start to secure more items. The kits also include information on the Farmers Talk mental health line.

"If we have to give these kits out, something has gone very wrong and we want producers to have access to the help if they require it," she said.

In the event a producer requires a kit, she said it will be left at the end of the lane, thereby avoiding the possibility of additional contamination that could result from additional people coming on to the farm.

While the kits have been developed specifically for the hog industry, she said they could be easily adapted to suit any livestock commodity. She said there is a provincial response team for each commodity composed of representatives from both industry and government and it was one of those meetings where the idea first surfaced.

Dr. Wood noted the poultry industry is also facing a significant threat from Avian Influenza and the kits could be easily adapted for use on those farms.

Dr. Wood said the kits will be re-examined periodically to ensure none of the material is out of date or expired. She added “hopefully they never have to come out of storage but we want them to be ready if they are needed.”

While they obviously aren’t part of the kit, Dr. Wood said another key component in preventing disease outbreak is adherence to protocols for visitors coming on to farms. She added it has been her experience that visitors are more than accommodating in following protocols, especially when the risks are pointed out. Dr. Wood explained helping to educate the non-farming public about the risk has to be a key component of any biosecurity plan.