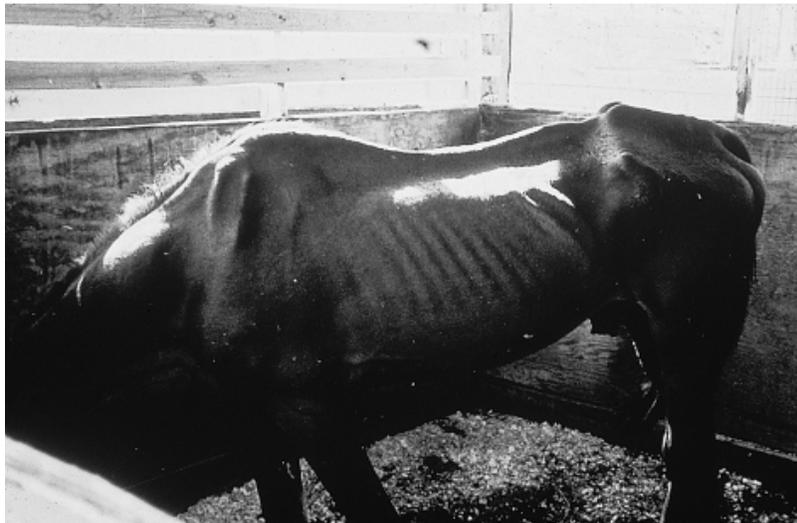


Biosecurity

Contagious Disease

Biosecurity involves preventing the introduction of disease to a farm and the spread of disease within that farm or to another. In its simplest form biosecurity involves a comprehensive vaccination program against contagious diseases. This is an effective measure during the regular movement of animals on and off a farm but also reduces the possibility of increased disease among animals that are mixed from different sources after a disaster.

Perimeter fences reduce the introduction of animals, fomites, and humans to farms every day as well as in most types of disasters. Feed and accessories deliveries and animal delivery and collection ports are potential sites for the introduction of disease. These contact points with the “outside” world should be located so that deliveries and dispatch points are separated from animals on the farms. Also, these facilities should be out of floodplains. This allows delivery and dispatch to continue even after common natural disasters without compromising the quality of biosecurity on a farm.



This horse was left unsupervised for several weeks after Hurricane Andrew. The owners had been hospitalized and did not have neighbors or friends check on their horses. The horse did recover, but a buddy system could have prevented this. (Photo by Lynn Caldwell.)

Biosecurity of transportation equipment can be enhanced by keeping trucks and trailers clean. Producers should conduct random checks on vehicles to inspect their cleanliness. Some producers have opted to use their own trucks for all animal shipments to prevent the spread of disease.

New arrivals to a farm should be placed in quarantine until a suitable time has elapsed to rule out the introduction of contagious disease. In some cases animals should be tested to see if they are carrying diseases. Sick animals should be separated from healthy ones by moving the healthy ones to clean sites. Sick animals should not be housed close to highly susceptible ones, such as sick cows next to dry cows, or sick pigs next to gilts.

Hospital facilities on farms should be kept immaculately clean. All utensils and tools should be sterilized between uses. This includes thermometers, drench guns, and other hospital equipment. All disposable items should be used only once.

Feed and Water

Another simple biosecurity measure involves retaining feed samples from each batch of feed for several months after consumption. These samples should be labeled clearly as to when they were delivered and by whom. This allows the investigation of feed-borne diseases that may be difficult to diagnose at a later stage without such evidence. Feed that animals do not finish should be investigated, and the reason for lack of palatability should be determined and corrected. Feed storage areas should be kept free of varmints. Fly and bird control should be practiced to limit potential introduction and spread of disease. The water supply for animals should be tested yearly for coliform bacteria, nitrates, sulfates, pesticides, and other contaminants.