



ONTARIO SOIL AND CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Keep your goats and business healthy with effective biosecurity

Free workshops offered this fall/winter

August 12, 2014 - The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association is offering free, one-day biosecurity workshops to help goat producers prevent or contain infectious disease on their farms. The workshops are funded by the governments of Canada and Ontario through *Growing Forward 2 (GF2)*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

Dr. Jim Ferrier, an experienced veterinarian who has led several workshops says, “Having a biosecurity plan and putting it into action is a producer’s best protection against livestock losses and decreased performance from infectious diseases.” He adds, “Putting stronger biosecurity measures in place need not be expensive. It is really an investment in disease prevention.”

Why attend?

Producers who attend a workshop will learn about their commodity’s national biosecurity standard and can then confidently develop a biosecurity plan with their veterinarians based on their own specific risks and priorities.

Goats are highly susceptible to chronic diseases like caprine arthritic encephalitis virus (C.A.E.) and Johne’s disease – both debilitating conditions that can seriously threaten herd health. Dr. Tom Veens, who leads the workshops, says that a couple of the best ways to prevent these diseases are to source animals from reputable sellers and to temporarily isolate new animals from the herd.

“The emphasis in the workshops is on how to design a biosecurity protocol that is right for the producer – identifying the weak points in the operation and attending to them,” says Dr. Veens.

Infectious disease can come from many different sources – viruses, parasites, fungi or bacteria – and is transmitted by people, animals, equipment or vehicles. An infectious disease outbreak on the farm can cause:

- Lower productivity and income
- Lower prices for animals
- Sicker animals meaning higher vet bills and labour costs
- Lower demand in the domestic market
- Closed export markets
- Potential for family and staff to get sick, too.

Incidents of infectious disease can affect individual producers, their neighbours and sometimes the entire industry.

“Outbreaks of infectious disease can have devastating health and economic effects for the industry and the province,” says Dr. Paul Innes, who helped develop the workshops and is the lead veterinarian on biosecurity for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. “Preventing or containing them with good biosecurity measures right on the farm is one of our best defenses.”

Disease outbreaks can be brought under control quickly and with minimal impact – or prevented entirely – when biosecurity measures are in place and routinely followed on farms and across the entire industry.

What to expect

The workshops are a combination of lecture, real-life case studies and hands-on exercises. Participants will learn about on-farm biosecurity, what it is, why it’s important and how disease is spread and controlled. They will review a case study and be encouraged to share their own experiences. They will work on an evaluation of their own farms and look at how to develop a biosecurity plan.

Producers will also learn how the *Growing Forward 2* funding program works, and how it may help with cost-share for the design and implementation of their biosecurity plans.

New and established producers are welcome to attend. Farm families and management teams are encouraged to attend the workshop together. No one will be asked to share personal or financial details of their operations.

Workshop dates and locations

Douro Community Center (East of Peterborough) – November 13th, 2014, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Kiwanis Community Center (111 Lakeside Drive), Stratford, November 28th, 2014, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.