

## **Guidelines for Conducting On-farm Research COVID-19 Information for Researchers & Canadian Beef Operations**

**Date: May 15, 2020**

Consider postponing on-farm research activities that require more than one person or interaction with farm operators whenever possible until provincial health guidelines relax physical distancing recommendations.

### **Before you start:**

- If certain conditions are met that can ensure the safety of researchers, farm owners and staff, then we recommend proceeding but with extreme caution.
- Consider postponing research activities that require close interaction between people or close interaction with farm operators/staff whenever possible.
- Familiarize yourself with your local Public Health guidelines and exemptions for agriculture in your province and monitor conditions as they change rapidly.
- Communication between researchers and farm owners prior to arrival is essential to ensure conditions are met to ensure the safety of those involved and the successful completion of the activity, remembering that conditions change rapidly.
- Have a game plan for how the activities of the day will unfold. Discuss the research activities ahead of arrival to ensure everyone knows what is expected from them.
- Seniors, children and those with underlying medical conditions or those in a high-risk category should not participate in research activities.
- Ensure everyone is aware of required guidelines regarding self-isolating and physical distancing and have taken necessary steps to reduce exposure.
- Only the required research team members should participate on-farm, however, consider additional help if the farm owners are in a high-risk category and not able to fully assist.
- Consider developing research teams that remain a social unit for the duration of the project.
- Ensure each person is aware of their responsibility to properly notify you if they are feeling unwell or of any risk of exposure to COVID-19 they may have encountered prior.
- If symptoms are observed by any member of the research team or farm owners/ staff, the team in its entirety is to go home immediately and follow the guidance provided by their local health authority for assessment and testing.

### **While conducting research activities:**

- Physical tasks (vaccination, castration, dehorning, branding, and drawing blood) should stay assigned as much as possible to the same people – avoid switching tasks whenever possible.
- Equipment and supplies should be cleaned and disinfected often, especially if they are to be handled by other people.

- While the recommended 2-metre distancing between people is impossible for many tasks, if the 2-metre distance cannot be maintained for certain tasks, try to have people from the same social unit assigned to these tasks.
- The visiting research team should provide personal protective equipment and hand sanitizers for themselves as well as farm workers who will be assisting with the activity.
- The farm should provide dedicated restroom facilities that have been sanitized prior to the arrival of the research team and after they depart; providing soap, water, and single use towels. Encourage them to wash their hands often throughout the day and especially prior to any breaks, lunch or dinner.
- Where travel to field sites is required, do not share vehicles with farm operators and travel separately.
- The research team should not handle livestock or pets on farm unless they are directly related to the research project.

### **Refreshment Breaks and Socializing**

- Food and drinks should not be provided. Visitors to the farm should be encouraged to bring any required provisions with them. If food or drinks are provided, it should be pre-packaged and not prepared on-farm. Disposable plates and utensils should be used.
- During break periods, ensure adequate space so people can sit and eat with the minimum 2-metre distance recommendation between each other.
- Do not allow visitors into the farm home under any circumstances.

### **Personal Hygiene Information**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, ensure hands are as free of organic matter as possible before using sanitizers.
- Personal protective equipment such as masks and latex gloves should be worn at all times when research teams and farm workers are interacting.
- When coughing or sneezing: cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand.
- Dispose of any used tissues or other materials in a plastic garbage bag that will be sealed as soon as possible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean high-touch surfaces frequently with regular household cleaners or diluted bleach.