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## **ONTARIO SOIL AND CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PROTECTING YOUR CROPS FROM PESTS**

Why Producers Need To Assess Their Farms For Biosecurity

On-farm biosecurity usually brings to mind protecting animals from disease. But crops are just as vulnerable to pests that can devastate an entire year's work in short order. That's why assessing the ways insects, fungus, viruses, bacteria, weeds and other threats can get into, move around and leave your operation is a wise first step to securing your farm's future.

"This is an essential step for good plant health - a healthy plant will be better able to fend off diseases," says Bill Ungar, President and CEO of Ungar International and a certified crop adviser. "Nasty pests can wipe out entire crops, and biosecurity helps mitigate the transmission of those pests."

### **Why biosecurity is important**

An on-farm disease outbreak could affect not only you, but also your neighbours, your industry and potentially the country. That's why the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is working with industry stakeholders, the provinces and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to develop national biosecurity standards and producer guidelines.

There is a national farm-level biosecurity planning guide as well as standards and producer guidelines for specific commodities. These are already in place for grains and oilseeds and potatoes. They are being developed for greenhouse, nursery and floriculture sectors and for the fruit and tree nut industry. This work is supported by the federal-provincial-territorial Growing Forward 2 program.

Here's what can happen with a pest infestation:

- Lower productivity and yields
- Higher production costs
- Lower farmland value
- Limited or closed markets
- Lower prices
- Decreased domestic sales

## Where do pests come from?

Pests can come from many different sources, which is why assessing your whole farm is critical to developing a good biosecurity plan. Here are some of the ways they can get onto your farm:

- Seeds/transplants
- Trucks, cars and tractors
- Sprayers, spreaders, and fertilizers
- Family, staff and visitors
- Water from irrigation
- Compost, manure, soil
- Animals, birds and insects
- Environmental conditions (e.g., wind)

## What you can do: assess, plan, implement

An honest, step-by-step assessment of the biosecurity risks on your property helps you identify areas that you may not have considered. For example:

- How often do fertilizer, seed and other suppliers drive their trucks on the farm?
- Do you have a logbook for people to sign in and out so that if there's a pest outbreak, you can better trace the source?
- Do you have separate entrances for incoming and outgoing traffic?
- Do your scouts have disposable booties or boots that can be scrubbed and disinfected?
- Does your custom applicator/harvester thoroughly clean their machines and equipment between farms?
- How do you handle your manure and cull stock to contain potential disease sources?

These are only a few of the things you may need to consider for your own operation. Every farmer will have different answers. The important thing is to think about, and respond to, the questions.

Once the assessment's done, you can look at the gaps and figure out what needs fixing first, second and third. By prioritizing your needs you can make changes in a logical, efficient way.

The assessment also goes a long way to helping you complete your biosecurity plan, and once the plan is in place, you're ready to implement it.

This is something you can do yourself or work with a certified crop adviser.

## ***Growing Forward 2* is here to help**

Farmers and growers in Ontario are encouraged to take free biosecurity workshops from the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) to learn the ins and outs of the process. Biosecurity workshops for different sectors are scheduled throughout the year. You must register through the *Growing Forward 2* (GF2) Client Portal at [www.ontarioprograms.net](http://www.ontarioprograms.net).

“The workshops really make you think about what you need – there are a lot of ‘what if’ scenarios and practical, hands-on training,” says Bill Ungar, who runs some of the workshops.

*Growing Forward 2* (GF2) funding is available for completing an assessment. Producers who take the workshop and complete an assessment, with their highest priority projects clearly identified, are in a better position to apply for up to 35 per cent cost-share funding available under GF2 to do improvements on the farm related to biosecurity.

There is one more GF2 cost-share application intake date for producers this year:

- November 16, 2015 to December 3, 2015

For full details on GF2 funding for producers, visit [www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org).

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## **List of resources and contacts**

### **Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association**

[http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/growing\\_forward\\_2\\_new.htm](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/growing_forward_2_new.htm)

### **Producer National Farm-Level Biosecurity Planning Guide - Proactive Management of Plants Resources**

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/plants/plant-protection/biosecurity/guide/eng/1323477130171/1323477259986>

### **Guide to the National Voluntary Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard for the Grains and Oilseeds Industry – Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/national-voluntary-farm-level-biosecurity-standard/eng/1354649087792/1355168633095>

### **National Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard for Potato Growers**

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/plants/potatoes/guidance-documents/national-farm-level-biosecurity-standard/eng/1351685363578/1351685528151>