

BIOSECURITY ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF FINNISH FARMERS

Leena Sahlström, Jonna Kyyrö, Terhi Virtanen, Tapani Lyytikäinen
Risk Assessment Research Unit, Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira
Mustialankatu 3, 00790 Helsinki, Finland
Leena.Sahlstrom@evira.fi

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Abstract

The biosecurity level on Finnish pig, cattle and sheep farms was surveyed in 2011. A questionnaire was sent to 4866 farmers and the response rate was 44%. The survey included questions about several different on-farm biosecurity measures as well as the farmers’ thoughts and attitudes on biosecurity. Biosecurity measures included in the study were for example pest control, personal biosecurity routines such as the use of protective clothing and boots and the use of hygiene barriers. Animal trade-related activities were also surveyed.

More biosecurity measures are usually implemented on pig farms than on cattle farms and the most important reason for the farmer to implement biosecurity is to protect his own farm, and secondly to protect neighboring farms. Earlier disease problems influence the implementation frequency significantly. There is still improvement potential on all farm types. According to the cattle farmers, most improvement potential lies in the visitors’ use of protective clothing and boots as well as control of rodents and birds. Pig farmers on the other hand recognize most improvement potential in control of rodents and birds, a hygiene barrier that separates the clean and dirty areas, a separate loading area, a carcass collection container outside the stables, and keeping doors locked.

We were able to define a group of farms that would continue farming for at least 6 years. These so called “future farmers” used more biosecurity measures and they were more willing to improve the on-farm biosecurity than other farmers. This might imply a tendency towards higher biosecurity as it seems that the “future farmers” are more motivated to implement and improve on-farm biosecurity.