

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 DURING SERVICE PROVIDER VISITS

27 March 2020

Why practice social (physical) distancing?

The Federal Government, together with State Governments and the Australian Department of Health, have clearly outlined the role of physical distancing (referred to as “social” distancing) in reducing the risk of COVID-19 spread in our communities. Practically, this means that in all aspects of work and daily life we attempt to maintain more than 1.5 metre separation between individuals, regardless of the activity.

Note that there is currently no evidence that farm animals or milk can act as a carrier for COVID-19.

To check on up-to-date guidelines on social (physical) distancing and infection control measures refer to:

- Australian Government Department of Health website (<https://www.health.gov.au>)
- Department of Health and Human Services website for your State or Territory.

It is strongly recommended that **farmers, service providers and others in higher risk age groups, plus those with underlying high-risk health conditions, do not engage in non-essential service provision** on-farm.

As a dairy farmer, what do I need to ask service providers and others prior to their visit?

If you are planning for someone to come on the farm, consider if the visit to farm is business critical. Is it urgent or can it be postponed?

Ask:

- Are there other options allowing for the job be done remotely (phone or via computer)?
- If a farm visit is required, then who absolutely needs to be involved with the task? Keep this to a minimum. Refer to the web links above.
- If it is business critical, talk with your service provider about how you'll approach it before they arrive, so they know what to expect and what you require from them.

Critical health questions to ask are:

- Have they been overseas recently or had any contact with infected or quarantined people?
- Are they well and have no cold or flu-like symptoms?
- Do they agree to meet physical distancing and hygiene measures at all times while on site?

Before they come to the farm, discuss the requirements specific to COVID-19:

Ensure physical distancing (more than 1.5 metres) between service provider and anyone else on farm that you require for the job on site.

Check that they can meet hand sanitising and personal hygiene expectations prior to arrival and frequently during the day (after each work task and for personal hygiene).

Maintain communication with those on the farm and frequently review that the task is being done using physical distancing principles.

As a service provider, can I go on farms?

Before I go on farm, am I prepared for physical distancing, while conducting the job on site and do I have the personal hygiene requirements (hand sanitiser etc) in my vehicle?

Check the Australian Government Department of Health website ([health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)) for up to date information on physical distancing requirements.

1. If you are planning to go on farm, consider if the visit to farm is business critical. Is it urgent or can it be postponed?
2. Are there other options allowing for the job be done remotely (phone or via computer)?
3. If a farm visit is required, then who absolutely needs to be involved with the task? Keep this to a minimum. Refer to the web links above.
4. Before I go on the farm, can I implement physical distancing for the job on site? Do I have enough hand sanitiser available for frequent use during the task and for personal hygiene?

Infection control for service providers

1. Service providers must thoroughly **wash hands with soap and water** or use hand sanitiser before and after completing work on farm. Carry hand sanitizer for use during the job.
2. Practice **good respiratory (coughing/sneezing into a tissue or your elbow) hygiene** and **avoid touching your face** at all times.
3. It is recommended that service providers **wear disposable gloves** through all parts of the farm visit regardless of the task being performed. Disposable gloves should be thrown out after each activity. Non-disposable (e.g. leather) gloves are to be thoroughly disinfected before and after each use or quarantined for 7 days or more.

Physical distancing for service providers

1. For visits requiring delivery only (e.g. feed/fertiliser) consider **arranging the delivery or drop off details by phone beforehand** to reduce the need for interaction with any farm staff.
2. **Ensure you minimise the time you need to be on farm** (e.g. complete the task and go).

Managing contact with “high touch” work surfaces

1. **Prevent multiple people handling tools and equipment** during the task. If required, disinfect with an appropriate sanitising agent at each changeover if tools and equipment must be handled by separate people.
2. Service providers should **practice sound biosecurity, including disinfection of all tools, equipment and footwear** and change into clean overalls between every job.