

CHECKLIST #15**STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR FARM FROM PEST AND DISEASE**

- ❑ Talk seriously with your local police, fire and emergency departments. Get to know them and let them know that you are making security a priority at your facility and will report any suspicious activities.
- ❑ Make sure the appropriate public authorities have copies of maps of your facilities that indicate service shut-off locations, security areas and any other areas of sensitivity or vulnerability.
- ❑ Evaluate every request for information about your operation. Never agree to an unusual request unless you have verified its validity. Whenever possible, require requests for sensitive information or tours to be in writing. Obtain as much information as possible—name, telephone number, address, reason for request, what the person will be doing with the information, who else has been contacted, etc. If anyone hesitates to cooperate with these requests, do not reveal information about or provide access to your operation.
- ❑ Ask for references. Make calls to verify that the person requesting any sensitive information is who he or she claims to be, especially if the person claims to be a reporter.
- ❑ Ensure that access to your facility is controlled. Establish check-in procedures for visitors. Require visitors to sign in and out upon entering and leaving the facility. Use visitor identification badges. This protects your visitor as well as you and your operation.
- ❑ Escort visitors at all times while they are on the premises. Employees should be instructed to report all unescorted visitors to the appropriate management and security personnel immediately.
- ❑ Maintain basic security by locking office doors and file cabinets. Have firewalls installed on your computer systems. Maintain separate business and personal computers. Keep all animal health products under lock and key. Use security lighting and alarms. Maintain fencing and gates. Post signs indicating restricted areas and no trespassing.
- ❑ Thoroughly screen all job applicants. Take the time to check all references. Double check anyone who shows a university or college identification card. Any hesitation by the prospective employee should exclude him or her from further consideration.
- ❑ Watch for unusual behavior by new employees. Pay attention to workers who stay unusually late, arrive unusually early, or access files, information, or other areas of the facility outside their responsibility. Do not allow workers to remove documents from the site. Be suspicious of employees who ask questions on sensitive subjects or bring cameras or video equipment onsite. Watch for workers who are standoffish. Note the mode of dress (e.g., absence of leather or other animal products).
- ❑ Tell all workers at hiring that unannounced locker checks are part of your routine security maintenance operation and that your operation will report and file charges against any employee who breaks the law.
- ❑ Inform employees in vulnerable areas that unauthorized surveillance or infiltration is a possibility. Any suspicious activity should be reported to supervisors or the appropriate security person immediately.
- ❑ Watch for warning signs that your operation may be a target. Such signs can include an increase in requests for animal-specific information or on-farm tours, calls and letters questioning or criticizing your business or particular practices, any harassing calls and letters to you or a nearby operation, increase in media attention to issues relating to the livestock industry, special interest group campaigns locally, and unusual interest in gaining employment.
- ❑ Develop a company statement concerning care, treatment and nutrition for your animals. Designate a single spokesperson to handle all calls about animal care, animal rights or any company policy concerning animals.
- ❑ Conduct routine tests of your security system and, if necessary, mock drills on your response procedures.
- ❑ Develop a crisis communication and action plan. Establish policies and procedures for handling disruptive and illegal situations, as well as for handling adverse publicity that might result. In developing response procedures, remember that steps to protect people should take priority over steps to protect property.

Source: American Farm Bureau. "Steps to Protect Your Farm from Terrorism," *The Voice of Agriculture Newsroom*, October 22, 2001. Accessed at www.fb.org/news/fbn/html/agriculturalterrorism.html.