

# FARM SECURITY

*Follow these simple steps to strengthen security on your farm.*

**Farm security is becoming a priority issue, particularly for livestock farmers. Protecting your farm, family, and property can be done in many ways and adapted as necessary. This resource will provide suggestions and ideas that can be used on farms across the state to increase security.**

- Talk with your local police/fire/emergency departments now. Get to know the people whose job it is to protect you, your loved ones, and your property. Consider providing copies of maps of the farm indicating service shutoff locations, security areas, and other areas of sensitivity or vulnerability for assistance during an emergency.
- Evaluate every request for information about your operation, even the most routine. Whenever possible, require requests be in writing. Always reply in writing. Obtain as much information as possible (e.g. name, phone number, address, reason for request, what will the person be doing with the information, who else may have been contacted, etc.). If the request is for a report/article, ask for a copy of the final report. Ask for references and follow up.
- Ensure access to the facility is controlled. Ensure all employees are aware of procedures for visitors. Place signs noting visitor procedures, require visitors to sign-in and out upon entering and leaving facility, and use visitor identification badges.
- Always escort visitors (especially reporters and photographers/videographers) throughout the facility. 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 or installing gates to limit access. Have firewalls installed on your computer systems. Lock all animal health products in cabinets or rooms with limited access. Use security lighting/alarms. Post signs indicating restricted areas and no trespassing, etc.
- Conduct routine inspections of barns for tampered locks/doors, hidden cameras, and unusual or out of place markings. Test security systems and consider annual mock drills to ensure emergency preparedness.
- Thoroughly screen all job applicants. Take the time to check all references. If you have any questions, ask for further references. Double-check anyone who shows a university or college ID. Any hesitation to provide additional references or documentation by the prospective employee should be a red flag and likely take them off your hire list.
- Train all employees that will interact with animals on proper animal care or handling procedures, including what to do if animals are sick or uncooperative and practice zero tolerance regarding animal mistreatment.
- Watch for warning sign that you may be a target. General patterns include an increase in requests for animal specific information or on-farm tours; calls/letters questioning or criticizing your business or particular practices; harassing calls/letters—perhaps not to your operation but one near you; increased media attention to issues relating to your specific industry; special interest group campaigns locally; and unusual interest in gaining employment, especially in roles involving animal handling.
- Report all suspicious and/or illegal incidents to local police.
- Prepare company statements and policies relative to care, treatment, nutrition, etc. for your animals
- Designate a spokesperson to handle all calls, including media, about animal care, animal rights or any company policy relative to animals.
- Develop a crisis communication/action plan. Establish policies and procedures for handling disruptive, illegal situations as well as for handling adverse publicity that might result from the misuse of information.
- Ensure all employees are familiar with farm policies regarding animal care, environmental stewardship, employee care and overall social responsibility.

\*Information adapted from Animal Agriculture Alliance for Illinois Farm Bureau.