**Level 3: Future Proofing Strategy**

**Biological Strategy Worksheet.**

**Biosecurity**

**Teacher Note:**

This worksheet is a **Future Proofing Strategies** exercise based on **Biosecurity.**

**Discussion questions:** Stimulate discussion and understanding why agribusiness should take biosecurity seriously.

**Activity:** "Build Your Biosecurity Plan".

**Why Our Future Depends on Taking Biosecurity Seriously**

Written by Campbell Parker[](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/media/k2/items/cache/12f7cc1659d76e183c084dd5ff6c2811_XL.jpg)

Good biosecurity practices also help to manage endemic diseases like Bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) and Johne’s disease.

**OPINION: When it comes to biosecurity, we often hear about the end of a response, but it’s the beginning that helps determine our success.**

August is Biosecurity Awareness Month and a timely reminder that we need to stay vigilant to help protect our valuable dairy sector.

In June, it was reported that New Zealand could be provincially declared free of Mycoplasma bovis (M. bovis) as early as October 2025; A huge milestone and one we should be proud of.

It is a milestone that could only be achieved through the tough decisions made along the way.

We want to take the experiences and lessons we had through the M. bovis response to prepare for future disease outbreaks.

We recently signed a new operational agreement on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) with the Government and sector partners which sets out how the costs of FMD readiness and response activities will be shared.

It also creates legally binding participation of industry in decision-making, ensuring that farmers’ interests, knowledge, and input is heard.

It is a real partnership, not only between the sector and Government but also within sector partners.

As part of the agreement, dairy, beef, sheep, pork, and deer farmers are represented, as well as dairy and meat processors. Each has a strong voice at the negotiation table.

As the inaugural chair of the Foot and Mouth Disease Council it’s something that I’m personally proud to have achieved. And I want to keep that momentum going.

We are reviewing our FMD operational plans and looking at the role the sector plays during a response.

We want to boost our workforce capability and capacity, so we have the right people with the right knowledge in place if we had another serious disease outbreak.

We are also focusing on refining the compensation system. We need a pragmatic and fair system that will provide farmers with the support they need. That includes timely, fair, and consistent compensation that allows farmers to get back to business as fast as possible.

Good biosecurity practices not only provide a degree of protection against potential exotic disease outbreaks, but they can also help to manage endemic diseases like Bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) and Johne’s disease.

It can be as simple as:

* Ensuring you have a good biosecurity plan in place on-farm that all staff and visitors are aware of
* Quarantining new animals on arrival for at least seven days and making sure they're tested and vaccinated for anything that you want to keep out
* Making sure your boundary fences are in good condition and secured.

Biosecurity is not just about emergencies, it's about a consistent and integrated approach to risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

Getting the planning right isn't just important, it's everything.

*Campbell Parker is DairyNZ chief executive*.

**Read More:**

* [Protect Your Patch: Treat farm boundaries like borders, says B+LNZ vet](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/rural-news/rural-farm-health/beef-lamb-nz-biosecurity-protect-your-patch-workshop)
* [M. bovis compensation service closes after supporting 1300+ NZ farmers](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/dairy-news/dairy-farm-health/mbovis-compensation-service-closure-new-zealand)
* [Dairy sector commits to major role in new Foot and Mouth readiness agreement](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/dairy-news/dairy-farm-health/foot-and-mouth-operational-agreement-dairynz-dcanz)
* [Biosecurity tops priorities for agribusiness leaders - report](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/dairy-news/dairy-general-news/kpmg-agribusiness-agenda-biosecurity-top-priority)

**Questions**

1. Why is it important for farmers to take biosecurity seriously even when there is no emergency outbreak happening?
2. How can having a strong biosecurity plan help farmers recover faster after a disease outbreak like Mycoplasma bovis or Foot and Mouth Disease?

**Activity:** "Build Your Biosecurity Plan"

**Objective:**  
Students will apply what they’ve learned by designing a simple biosecurity plan for a farm.

**Instructions:**

* Imagine you are the manager of a dairy, sheep & beef, pig, poultry or deer farm in New Zealand. Create a basic biosecurity checklist for your farm to protect against disease outbreaks.
* Your plan must include at least 3 actions based on what you learned from the article. Choose from or add your own ideas:
* Quarantining new animals
* Checking and securing boundary fences
* Making sure staff and visitors follow hygiene procedures
* Keeping good records of animal movements
* Training staff on biosecurity protocols
* Planning how you would respond if a disease outbreak was detected nearby
* Write 2–3 sentences explaining why your farm’s future depends on having a strong biosecurity plan.

**Answers**

1. Why is it important for farmers to take biosecurity seriously even when there is no emergency outbreak happening?

It is important because biosecurity is about preventing problems before they happen. Even when there is not a disease outbreak, harmful pests or diseases can still be spreading slowly or entering the country without being noticed right away. By taking biosecurity seriously all the time, farmers reduce the risk of an outbreak starting in the first place. It also keeps their animals healthy, protects their income, and helps protect New Zealand’s reputation as a clean, disease-free country.

1. How can having a strong biosecurity plan help farmers recover faster after a disease outbreak like Mycoplasma bovis or Foot and Mouth Disease?

A strong biosecurity plan helps farmers respond quickly and effectively when an outbreak happens. It means they already have rules in place, staff trained, and systems for tracking animal movements or isolating infected animals. This helps stop the disease from spreading further and makes it easier to prove what happened, which can speed up compensation and support. A good plan also helps them get back to normal business faster and with less financial loss.