



## COVID-19: Information for Researchers

### Guidelines for Conducting On-farm Research Activities

**June 16, 2020**

**Consider postponing on-farm research activities that require more than one person or interaction with farm owners/workers whenever possible until provincial Public Health Authorities relax physical distancing recommendations. Refer to the recommendations/guidelines of your local Public Health and your research institution, regarding self-isolating and physical distancing. There should be no interprovincial travel where self isolation is required.**

#### **Before you start:**

- Familiarize yourself and follow your local Public Health guidelines and exemptions for agriculture in your province and monitor conditions as they change rapidly.
- Follow the guidelines/policies/restrictions of your research institution and ensure any required authorizations are in place.
- You must request and have approval from the farm owners to access property, and you must schedule any visits.
- Communication between researchers and farm owners prior to arrival is essential to ensure conditions are met to ensure the safety of those involved and the successful completion of the research activities, remembering that conditions change rapidly.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the recommendations/guidelines of the local Public Health and your research institutions, regarding self-isolating and physical distancing and have taken necessary steps to reduce exposure.
- Only the required research team members should participate on-farm, however, consider additional help if the farm owners/workers are in a high-risk category and not able to fully assist.
- Consider developing research teams that remain a social unit for the duration of the project.
- Limit the number of farm visits in a daily schedule and carefully plan the itinerary.
- Have a game plan for how the activities of the day will unfold. Discuss the research activities ahead of arrival to ensure everyone knows what is expected from them.
- Ensure each person is aware of their responsibility to properly notify you if they are feeling unwell or of any risk of exposure to COVID-19 they may have encountered prior.

- If symptoms are observed by any member of the research team, the team in its entirety is to go home immediately and follow the guidance provided by their local health authority for assessment and testing.

**While conducting research activities:**

- All people from outside the farm who enter a production area must wear clean, disinfected (or disposable) boots and clean clothes.
- Comply at all times with the health recommendations:
  - Hand hygiene;
  - Respiratory etiquette;
  - Social distancing (2 metres or the length of a cow):
    - If it is impossible to stay at least 2 metres away from others, we strongly recommend that you wear a face covering (such as a mask or a visor);
    - No direct contact (shaking hands, hugs).
    - Do not share equipment (for example: pen, paper, tools, laptop).
- Physical tasks (milk/feed/manure sampling, reproductive tractus palpation, drawing blood, etc.) should stay assigned as much as possible to the same people – avoid switching tasks whenever possible.
- Surfaces, equipment and supplies should be cleaned and disinfected often, especially if they are to be handled by other people.
- The visiting research team should provide personal protective equipment, hand sanitizers and disinfectant for themselves as well as farm owners/workers who will be assisting with the research activity.
- Where travel to field sites is required, do not share vehicles with farm owners/workers and travel separately.
- The research team should not handle livestock or pets on farms unless they are directly related to the project.