

SOCIAL DISTANCING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS ON FARM

24 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 social distancing (physical 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 a 1.5 metre separation between individuals, regardless of the activity.

Social distancing during any service provider activities on a dairy farm is important. Primarily this is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between the service provider and the on-farm team but also to lessen the risk of multiple people on farm, or in the service provider business, having to self-isolate should one involved become infected with COVID-19.

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

Can you go on farms?

Before you go on farm, check the Australian Government Department of Health website (<https://www.health.gov.au/>) for up to date information on social distancing policies.

1. If you are planning to go on farm, consider if the visit to farm is business critical.
2. Are there other options, for example, can the job be done over the phone or some other way?
3. Is it urgent or can it be postponed?
4. Who absolutely needs to be involved?

If it is business critical, talk with your clients about how you'll approach it before you arrive, so they know what to expect and what you require from them.

Practical "social distancing" and infection control for service providers

1. It is strongly recommended that **farmers or service providers over 60 years of age or those with underlying high-risk conditions (e.g. smoking) do not engage in non-essential service provision** on-farm.
2. Service providers must **wash hands with soap and water** before and after completing work on the farm, practice **good respiratory (coughing/sneezing) hygiene** and **avoid touching their face** at all times. Carry hand sanitizer (if available) in case of no hand washing facilities.
3. Service providers should **consider wearing disposable gloves** during all parts of the farm visit, regardless of the activity. Dispose of the gloves after the farm visit is completed.
4. 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 social interaction with any farm staff.
5. For services being carried out on farm **consider if the task can be carried out without contact** with farm staff (e.g. take photos, provide directions over the phone, use farm maps)
6. Always **maintain at least a 1.5 metre separation** between service providers and members of the on-farm team regardless of the task.
7. **Avoid multiple people handling equipment** during the task if possible. If required, disinfect with an appropriate sanitising agent if equipment must be handled by separate people.
8. Service providers should **practice sound biosecurity, including disinfection of all equipment and footwear** and changing into clean overalls between every job.
9. **Avoid spending any additional non-essential time on farm** (e.g. complete the task and go).