

Abstract

Food for the American population is grown by a mere two percent of its population. This staggering proportion makes protection of that food supply vitally important. Biosecurity can be defined for our purposes as practices used to prevent the spread of disease. In the event of a disease outbreak in this country, major supply routes could be shut down in response. The goal of this research was to motivate dairy farmers in Vermont to keep track of visitors to their farms and improve their knowledge of biosecurity and biosecurity practices. If farmers had a paper trail of these visitors, it might be possible to trace the spread of infection in the case of an outbreak and more effectively contain it without unnecessary consequences to farmers. The farms surveyed for this project were mostly small, family run farms in Addison county, Vermont. Farmers were surveyed on their current biosecurity practices, their opinions and ideas about the importance of recording visitors, and what means of motivation was necessary in order for it to be worthwhile for their business. Farmers were surveyed twice in person, one month apart, and asked to record visitors for the intervening month. These farmers generally believed that a nationwide disease outbreak would be unlikely to affect them. Many agreed that instead of an individual visitor list, a list of service providers to the farm would be sufficient as they would be the most frequent, and highest risk visitors. Most believed that an action plan should exist for each farm in the case of an emergency, but must be carried out at the state and national level to be effective. Biosecurity exists to protect the farmer as well as the consumer, and both should be participants in an effective action plan.