



Topic 5. Feed, Water, and Storage

Feed and water are central to daily livestock care and also represent common pathways for disease introduction and spread. Because these inputs are frequently sourced, stored, handled, and shared, they are an important focus of biosecurity education for small and backyard operations.

Feed may enter an operation from off-property sources, be transported across multiple locations, or be stored for extended periods before use. From a biosecurity perspective, attention is placed on understanding where feed comes from, how it is handled once it arrives, and how it is distributed among animals. Even when feed quality is high, movement and storage conditions can influence exposure to contaminants, pests, or moisture.

Water sources vary widely across operations and may include wells, municipal supplies, surface water, or collected rainwater. In educational terms, water is considered both a nutritional input and a potential interface with the surrounding environment. Shared water sources, open access points, and environmental exposure can influence how pathogens move within or between animal groups.

Storage practices play a key role in shaping feed and water risk. Feed and bedding stored in areas accessible to wildlife, pests, or domestic animals may be more likely to experience contamination. Similarly, storage containers, bins, and handling tools can become shared contact points if used across multiple species or groups. Awareness of how and where materials are stored can help clarify these pathways.

Biosecurity education emphasizes that feed and water risks are often managed indirectly, through routine choices rather than specialized interventions. Understanding sourcing, storage, and handling patterns allows livestock keepers to evaluate how these everyday inputs fit into the broader biosecurity picture. The goal is not to prescribe specific products or methods, but to support informed consideration of how feed and water interact with animal health.

References

United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. (2015). Biosecurity guide for livestock and poultry producers. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov>

United States Department of Agriculture. (2020). Defend the flock: Biosecurity basics. <https://www.usda.gov>

Ohio State University Extension. (2019). Feed management and biosecurity considerations for small farms. <https://ohioline.osu.edu>

Backyard Biosecurity Basics - Education

<https://backyardbiosecurity.org>

info@backyardbiosecurity.org



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2011). Good practices for biosecurity in animal production. <https://www.fao.org>

Backyard Biosecurity Basics - Education

<https://backyardbiosecurity.org>

info@backyardbiosecurity.org