

1. A clearly defined plan for responding to FAD and transboundary disease on a provincial and national level.
2. More responsibility for emerging disease preparedness on the part of industry.
3. A nationally delivered, practical and mandatory surveillance system.
4. More global thinking and leadership from swine veterinarians.
5. A sustainable, health-focused pork industry with a clear and practical antimicrobial plan.

Dealing with emerging diseases is a daunting challenge, so MacDougald looks to Winston Churchill for inspiration:

“It is no use saying ‘we are doing our best’. You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.”

On second thought, maybe Churchill isn't the best example. Sure, he stared down the opposition in World War I and II, but he never faced the most fearsome enemy of all: The bad blind date.

## Part two: Biosecurity and Disease Risk Management in Transportation

**As a kid, there's nothing more exciting than a road trip. Then again, unless you're travelling on a tight budget, you're not surrounded by a hundred squealing pigs. For the pork industry in Canada, a road trip is fraught with challenges, most notably the need for disease risk management. As Vice-President of Operations for Steve's Livestock Transport, the largest commercial livestock carrier in North America, Rick Peters knows that challenge better than anyone. He talked about how his company manages disease risk in transporting pigs and the lessons that producers can draw from his experience.**

When you transport pigs for 29 years and now average 150,000 pigs per week, you learn a few things about biosecurity. Under the direction of CEO and President Steve Brandt, Steve's Livestock Transport applied those lessons while building their first truck washing facilities in 1995. Since then, they have added 3 more locations and improved biosecurity measures, including undercarriage washing and Canada's first industrial-strength baking bays for livestock trailers. As Brandt explains, though, a “clean” trip involves a host of factors.



Rick Peters

### Drivers

Biosecurity for their drivers starts with some basics. They can't live on premises where pigs are kept nor work at any hog facility, and must not have pets in their trucks.

When first hired, drivers must take a 3-day orientation program and pass the Trucker Quality Assurance test before being paired with an experienced driver trainer. Over the next 244 hours (now THAT'S a road trip), the new driver learns driving techniques, livestock handling during loading and unloading, and biosecurity protocols for all loads. These protocols include correct entry and exit for the truck cab and trailer, proper clean-up of truck cabs, clothing and tools, and where, when and how to change footwear and coveralls for loading and unloading.

### Trailers

Their trailers are made and ordered to maximize biosecurity and ease of washing. For example, hundreds of extra welds and capping keep manure from crevices and open tubes, preventing contamination.

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## Yard biosecurity

All livestock, bedding and manure must be removed from a truck before it can enter any Steve's Livestock location, including wash bays. Clean and dirty trailers are kept apart via separate parking and loading areas, and all drivers must ensure trucks are clean before leaving the yard.

## On-farm biosecurity

Drivers make boarding changes to the truck's exterior before dressing to work inside. They must never go beyond the trailer when loading or enter the barn to do their paperwork. Pigs that fall to the ground are never placed back in the trailer and chase boards are used inside the trailer to prevent pigs from returning to the barn.

## Biosecurity during transport

Proper biosecurity doesn't end at the farm gate. Drivers must be aware of other livestock trailers on the road and may need to follow predetermined routes if stipulated by the customer or logistics coordinator. And in the spirit of "trust but verify", GPS software shows which routes trucks have taken at any given time.

## Wash bays

When you're washing hundreds of trailers each week, quality and consistency are vital to good biosecurity. That's why Steve's designates three key leaders to ensure proper training of new personnel and consistency of the washes. All new washers complete an orientation session and cannot live on premises where pigs are kept. Their suits and boots are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each wash, as are the floors in the staff room and common areas.

Design of the wash bays is also crucial, featuring a one way drive-through and sloped floors for quick drainage of water. All bays feature air make up units to continuously flow fresh air through the bay and quickly dissipate fog in a wash bay during the winter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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## Complete Trailer Wash SOP

Steve's Transport uses only fresh water, avoiding the hazards of recycled water experienced by some facilities in the U.S. After the wash bay floor is rinsed and disinfected, the trailer is brought in and all winter covers, decking and tools are removed. The process itself is like bubbles on steroids:

1. A fire hose washes the decking and interior at 90 PSI and 45 gallons per minute.
2. Foaming detergent scrubs inside and out and a high pressure hose rinses all surfaces.
3. The fire hose rinses down the wash bay floor, decking and trailer interior.

Following a visual inspection, disinfectant is foamed over all equipment and the decking is replaced and given a final disinfection. All areas of the trailer and tools are then inspected and re-washed if necessary.

## Under-carriage wash

Like those hard-to-get-to spots in the shower, the underside of a trailer is tough to properly wash. To that end, Steve's Blumenort wash bay boasts the first undercarriage wash system for livestock trailers. With 16 jets embedded in the floor and 4 on each side, there's enough high-pressure water being sprayed to clean a tank (but don't try this at home).

## Separation system

Separation systems handle the wastewater that results from the washing process. Water and solids are pushed toward a set of screens by the sloped floors where solids are held back and water gets pumped to municipal wastewater collection ponds.

## Drying bays

After washing, trailers are backed into mechanical dry bays against a bank of aeration fans, where the air is heated to about 35 degrees Celsius. Fans then blow this hot air into the trailer.

## Baking bays

It may sound like something your grandma used to whip up dessert, but the "pies" involved here are far less appetizing. The baking bay kills viruses and bacteria, the final step in extensive sanitation protocol for transport. If requested, a customer's trailer can be parked in the bay at an ambient temperature of 71-77 degrees for at least 10 minutes. After cool down, it's removed and parked in the clean area of the yard.

## Other factors

It's easy to forget some less obvious precautions, but they are no less important:

1. Ensuring that bedding suppliers follow strict recommendations for biosecurity.
2. Having all drivers use plastic tubs to store their clean boots and coveralls when going to pick up a load, and making sure the tubs, boots and coveralls have been washed and disinfected.
3. Training drivers on avoiding ground contact while entering and exiting trailers.

## What it all means to you

Apart from giving you peace of mind if you deal with Steve's Livestock for your truck washing, many of the principles they embrace carry over to other aspects of biosecurity. Whether cleaning a trailer, entering a barn or dealing with third parties such as feed reps on-farm, it's important to be thorough, aware and committed to the highest standards of care, and to ensure that those you deal with do the same. Otherwise, you may end up like that kid at the end of a long road trip: Tired, hungry and bawling your eyes out. ■

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