

Over the past few weeks, you've likely heard the term "social distancing." Hopefully, you've also been practicing social distancing – avoiding crowds and only traveling when necessary – as a way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For many of us, social distancing is new and uncomfortable. We are having a hard time adjusting to spending time at home and not being able to come and go as we please. For farmers, this concept is not new. For years, Indiana's hog farmers have practiced strict biosecurity – essentially, social distancing for pigs.

Sickness can spread quickly among livestock. Much like social distancing for humans, the complete elimination of all disease is not the goal – the goal is to keep out pathogens to which the herd has not been exposed. Biosecurity measures protect the health of the pigs, and in turn, protect the food supply and the health of consumers. Biosecurity is an important part of a farmer's job. So, what do biosecurity protocols look like?

- The herd should be located as far as possible from any other swine or livestock.
- Visitors should be kept to a minimum and should have no pig contact for at least twenty-four hours before arriving on the farm.
- A sign-in book should be maintained for all visitors.
- All visitors are required to wear clean clothing and boots – in many cases, this means a disposable coverall and plastic shoe covers.
- Employees are required to shower-in before coming into contact with the herd.
- Between herds, all rooms are cleaned thoroughly with a high-pressure washer and disinfected with a broad-spectrum cleaner.

Indiana's hog farmers are happy to see the level of attention that's being paid to the transfer of virus right now - it is something our industry has been very cognizant of for a while, and that's why we have such stringent biosecurity protocols. Often, people believe that we want to be closed off from the public or that we're trying to be secretive about our production practices. But that is not the case - we are simply trying to protect our pigs and our workers the same way that, right this very moment, you are trying to care for your family.