



Farm Health Guardian's Protocol facial recognition controlled barn entry system being shown to attendees at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. PHOTO: FARM HEALTH GUARDIAN

■ BIOSECURITY

Ontario company launches facial recognition for barns

The system will prevent entry by workers or suppliers who shouldn't be in the barn

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An award-winning Canadian tech start-up that enables livestock producers to protect against entry by disease-risky vehicles has launched a new service to do the same for human visitors.

Protocol is billed by Guelph-based Farm Health Guardian as a "system us(ing) facial recognition technology to proactively control livestock and poultry barn entry points, enabling farm managers to lower the risk of disease entry and protect animal health."

► WHY IT MATTERS

Widespread adoption of facial recognition capabilities could replace cumbersome or failure-prone controlled-entry systems that use keypads, fobs or card-scanners.

The company's Farm Health Protect software allows producers to establish and maintain virtual "fences" around livestock production facilities for transport trucks and other vehicles. The system is used extensively in hog and poultry settings in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Additional inroads were made over the past year in Quebec and Ontario. Through a partnership in the United Kingdom, Farm Health Guardian also entered the market in Europe last year.

The effectiveness of the product led to awards for the company from OMAFRA and the U.K.-based Tesco grocery retailer.

"Now we're strengthening the people part of biosecurity," said CEO Rob Hannam, as his firm officially launched Protocol at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show near Woodstock.

At the show's ag tech breakfast, Hannam told the story of a Manitoba veterinarian who was locked out of a barn she regularly visited because a keypad code had recently been changed. She had difficulty contacting the farm owner because, in keeping with biosecurity guidelines, he had entered a separate production facility and left his outside clothes and cellphone in the entryway.

"With Protocol, there is never a question of who is entering your barn or if they have met your biosecurity requirements," said Hannam. The facial recognition apparatus went through a couple of prototypes before Farm Health Guardian settled on the design. Hannam said it can withstand the potentially harsh environments of livestock barn entryways.

Durability aside, he says the biggest selling point is the flexibility it offers for producers to individually configure each entryway based on factors such as downtime following a disease outbreak, health status and other biosecurity policies. It can also ensure that workers who were in one barn can't accidentally or purposely go to another one if the first barn has a compromised health status.

The system is adaptable to roll-up doors and fumigation rooms to ensure that deliveries are biosecure.

Hannam says the new product fits well with a livestock sector that seeks more specialization among input suppliers.

"More and more, as our sector gets more integrated, these people (visitors to a barn) go to other farms and other locations before they arrive at this location," he said.

"If we can help make it easier to follow the biosecurity protocols ... that's saving lots of livestock, lots of dollars, and making it better for the workers on the farms."

NEWS BRIEFS

DLF acquires Corteva's alfalfa breeding program

Corteva Agriscience's alfalfa breeding program has been acquired by DLF, effective Sept. 1. DLF said in a release it intends to offer varieties comparable to Pioneer and Dairyland Seed alfalfa products once fully transitioned after the 2024 season. The Corteva breeding program acquisition strengthens DLF's existing alfalfa portfolio and brands, the company said. The move also ties together the company's alfalfa breeding

efforts worldwide by integrating it into DLF's global research and development program. The acquisition includes Corteva's Alforex Seeds® brand name and trademarks, including Hi-Gest® alfalfa technology, Hi-Ton performance alfalfa, Hi-Salt salinity tolerant alfalfa, and msSuntra® hybrid technology, current commercial alfalfa varieties and select Corteva personnel supporting the alfalfa program.



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