

# Have you considered digitising your visitor sign-in process?

Helen Newman, Berry Industry Development Officer, Agricultural Produce Commission

Are you struggling with managing your paper-based visitor sign-ins?  
Would you like to give visitors to your farm digital WHS and biosecurity inductions or instructions before they enter your property?

Every farm should have a visitor sign-in process that, at a minimum, keeps track of:

- who is visiting
- their contact details
- date and time of the visit
- reason for visit

To manage workplace health and safety (WHS) obligations and biosecurity risks, you also need to give your visitors instructions about how to behave on your property and keep track of their movements including:

- where they are going and which blocks they have visited
- when and where they last had contact with the same crop type
- if they have recently been exposed to pests and diseases, either interstate or overseas

Digital visitor sign-in tools are used widely in many sectors to deliver an ever-increasing range of services and data insights to businesses. Some systems are web-based, some use apps, and some are generated using programs which are most likely already available on your computer.

Any system you chose should generate a searchable electronic record of your visitors that you can use if there is an emergency or if you need to conduct tracebacks for biosecurity purposes. More advanced systems have live tracking of visitor movement, messaging/emergency alert capabilities (e.g. bushfire alerts) and can include customisable WHS and biosecurity inductions with maps, written instructions and/or videos.

There are many options for directing visitors to a digital sign-in:

- email or SMS a link ahead of their visit
- make a link available on your website
- provide a dedicated sign-in device at your office like a tablet
- provide a QR code that can be scanned using a mobile phone at your office or on the front gate

Some systems even have geo-sensing (auto arrival and departure) capabilities and can alert you when someone with the sign-in app has come onto your property.

## So how can a digital sign-in be used on a farm?

A good digital sign-in system can be adapted to suit any farm and can be as simple or as detailed as you like. Choose a system that is easy for visitors to access and use (so that they actually use it!) and something that is easy to update so you can make changes as needed.

## Example DIY sign-in system

Here is an example of a simple Do-It-Yourself system created using a widely available online form program.

In this example, a simple printed sign was created with a scannable QR code that takes visitors to the digital sign-in system (Figure 1). There are free programs available online that generate QR codes. The sign can be placed at the farm gate or wherever visitors would normally go to sign-in. Contact details of the Site Manager were included; this is particularly useful if your sign-in post isn't staffed.



**Figure 1. Visitor using the camera on their mobile phone to scan the QR code to access the visitor sign-in**  
 Photo credit: Helen Newman

**It is best practice to have clear signage that directs visitors to a sign-in point and restricts access to growing and packing areas. This helps protect visitors and your farming operations from WHS and biosecurity risks.**

The first part of your digital sign-in can contain an introduction to the site, site instructions, and/or site inductions (e.g. WHS and Biosecurity). You can use written instructions, images, and/or videos.

If there are any particular issues that you need your visitors to be aware of, you should mention these clearly here.



Example site instructions can be found by scanning this QR code or visiting:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/BMXYJCG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BMXYJCG)

After your introductory section, you can start collecting the information you need from your visitors. In this example, we have asked for the information that would normally be collected in a paper-based sign in sheet.

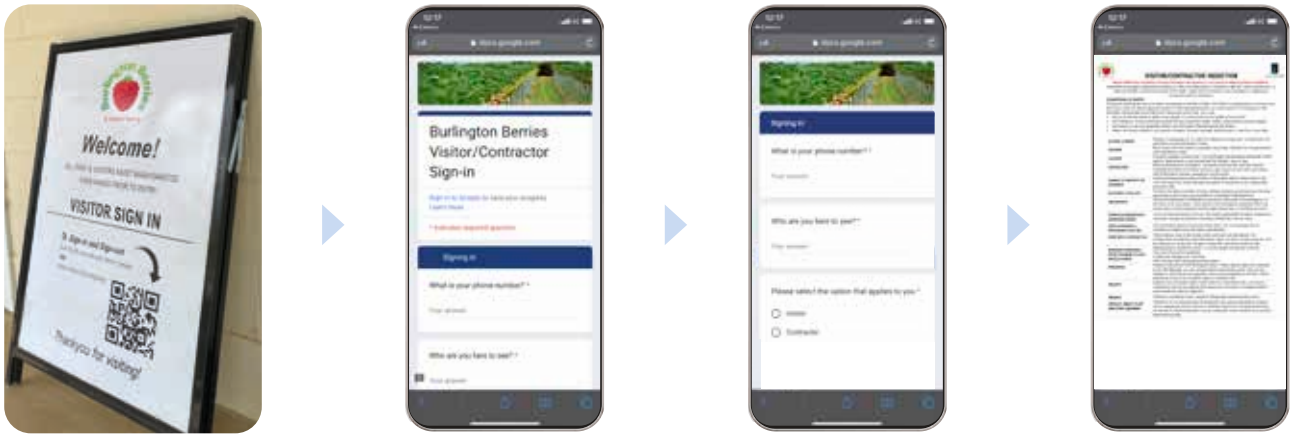
The date and time of the visit is collected in the system automatically when the sign-in is completed. Drop down menus, maps, multiple choice selections, etc. are all options that can be added here to customise the sign-in process for your purposes.

Once your visitor has entered their information into this form it will be saved, and you can access it as required.

The program should allow you to export and save a report, so you have a searchable document that you can keep on file.

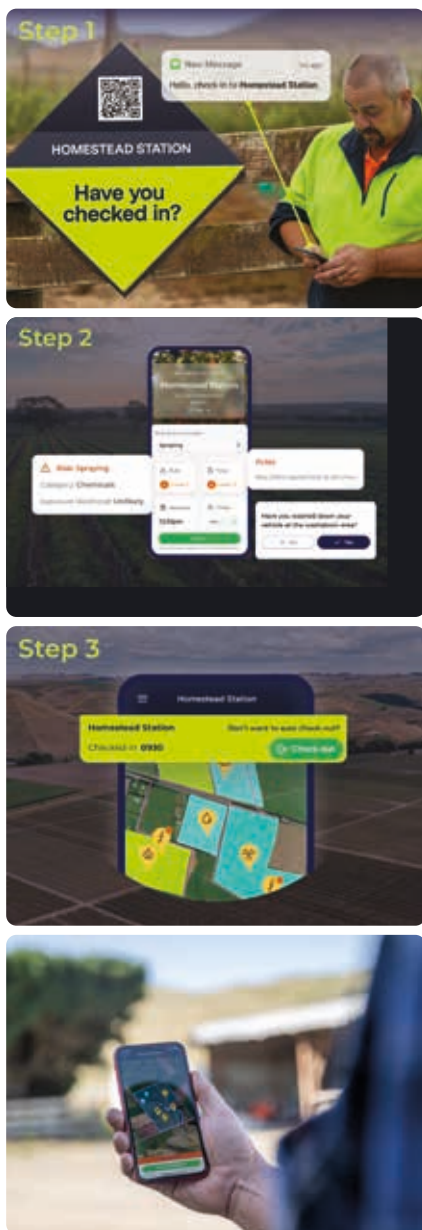
Examples of programs you could use to build a DIY visitor sign-in system include:

- Survey Monkey (as used in our linked example)
- Google Forms (used in Figure 2)
- Microsoft Forms
- Web based form programs which can be incorporated into your existing website like Kali Forms, Jotforms, Gravity Forms or Cognito



**Figure 2. Burlington Berries created their digital visitor sign-in using Google Forms**

Photo credit: Helen Newman



### Commercially available systems

There are many companies that offer commercially available visitor sign-in platforms. Some offer simple systems that look like the DIY example above but with the addition of sign-out functionality.

Others offer much more advanced functionality with customisable information-rich maps, real-time hazard alerts, geo-sensing sign-in and sign-out, options for visitors to upload documents such as certificates, dashboards with customised alerts, and the list goes on.

When looking for the right visitor sign-in system for your situation, it is important to ask questions of potential vendors and to request free demonstrations.

### Here are some questions to consider when getting started and thinking about which features you might need:

- How is the system accessed by visitors and does this suit your needs?
- Can alerts be sent if there is an on-site emergency?
- Can visitor reports be generated?
- Is data stored and filed securely?
- Can you add your own visitor inductions/site instructions?
- Does the system capture information to help with biosecurity tracebacks?
- Does the system generate reports that meet the needs of your compliance programs (e.g. Freshcare)?

**Figure 3. Images of a commercially available platform**

Photo credit: Onside Software