

### How to Protect Your Flock from Avian Influenza

**Each farmer, employee and every person entering all poultry barns must put on clean footwear, protective clothing and follow all biosecurity protocols on every entry into barns.**

Only a minimal number of visitors should have access to the barn vicinity, and even fewer individuals should have permission to enter the poultry barn. Everyone should have barn-specific clothing and footwear - **including farmers**. All representatives/visitors should be wearing proper/full personal protective equipment (PPE) if they are to enter your property and must follow your strict biosecurity protocols (clean coveralls, boot covers/barn specific boots, gloves) if entering into your barn. Having a lock and locking the poultry barn entry doors is a good way to minimize unexpected visitors. It is highly recommended to utilize a step-over barrier prior to entering any restricted zone, which is a reminder to change footwear and clothing. All farmers and visitors should wash or use hand sanitizer prior to entry and before leaving the poultry premises, further limiting any potential for cross-contamination.

**Have proper farm gate and barn signage alerting all visitors to the farm of your biosecurity and keep a logbook of all visitors.**

There are many ways that infectious agents (viruses, bacteria, etc.) can enter your farm. The farmer's first line of defense should be to minimize and manage who enters, ensure they are following proper biosecurity protocols and track all visitors' movements. Placing official signage clearly indicates that the premise is biosecure and that entry without permission is prohibited. A good way to minimize traffic is to set up a barrier across the laneways and establish a specific "visitor parking" area outside of the barn vicinity. Your farm logbook should contain the following information: visitors name, company name, date and time of entry/exit, whether the visitor has had contact with poultry in the last 24 hours and whether or not those birds were healthy. You can contact your board office for specific examples and templates of the log book.

**Minimize visits to other poultry production sites and avoid any co-mingling of birds or contact with outside/wild birds.**

Visiting other poultry sites and contact with wild birds and their droppings increases the likelihood of disease entering your farm premises. Ensure no one exposed to your poultry are in contact with other birds, such as wild birds, waterfowl, small flocks and show birds. Duck/goose hunting by those engaged in the rearing/owning of poultry is strongly discouraged. Those who do hunt should shower and change all clothing, as well as adhere to a 72-hour wait period before coming into contact with domestic poultry. Please refer to provincial government fact sheets for proper hunting practices.

**Avoid exchanging equipment with other poultry production sites.**

Equipment may carry a number of infectious diseases, depending on temperature, organic material, and use. Due to the risk of cross contamination, farmers should avoid sharing equipment between poultry premises. If sharing must occur, equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before leaving one premise and before entering poultry barns.

**Ensure all vehicles/farm equipment that access the barn vicinity are properly washed and disinfected and that the laneway is restricted/secured.**

Dirty vehicles/equipment can contaminate the poultry premises, which can then contaminate the poultry barn. Only essential farm vehicles should be allowed to enter onto your property and should be washed according to the farm's biosecurity protocols. Furthermore, farm equipment that has had contact with any



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crop activities could be contaminated with bird manure or droppings, and should be cleaned and disinfected after use, and not stored near the poultry barn.

### **Provide training for farm and company personnel in biosecurity and disease prevention.**

Developing and implementing biosecurity protocols reduces the likelihood of an infectious agent impacting your flock. Farmers are highly recommended to consult their veterinarian once a year to review their biosecurity protocols. Furthermore, farmers should take the time to educate and demonstrate their farm's biosecurity practices to all employees, keep a record of all the training that is provided and continually monitor compliance with your protocols. Ensure service providers and visitors know and respect your biosecurity plan and know their plans as well.

### **Ensure adequate control of wild birds and rodents.**

Preventing the entry of wild birds, rodents and insects is important, due to their ability to carry infectious diseases into the poultry premises. Farmers should implement an effective and well-documented pest control program (i.e., feed spillage should be quickly cleaned up and disposed of, piles of rubbish and mortalities to be covered and stored away from the barn, eliminate harborage sites and maintain bait stations, etc.). Maintain poultry barns in good condition (repair holes, screens as needed) to reduce the risk of unwanted entry into the barn. Deter birds from gathering on or near surface water on the premises.

### **Have a pressure washer or a hose available to wash tires and equipment, and make this available to service vehicles.**

Having a pressure washer or hose available allows suppliers/visitors to wash/disinfect their tires and wheel wells before entering the farm. This practice can reduce contaminated tire debris from entering your poultry premises.

### **If possible, “heat treat” the barn/litter ahead of chick or poult placement (to 30°C for a minimum of 3 days).**

“Heat treatment” of new bedding placed in the barn, and keeping outdoor piles of bedding material covered, can minimize the risk associated with new bedding being contaminated with wild bird feces. Heat treating refers to heating the barn to 30°C and then maintaining the barn at that temperature for a minimum of 3 days. *(Note: the floor under the bedding must reach 30°C for this technique to be effective.)* The temperature should be measured with an appropriate thermometer (consider an infrared thermometer) at multiple locations along the inside perimeter of the barn at least three times a day. As a best management practice, poultry farmers are encouraged to use this heat treatment method in their barns after cleanout, after the introduction of new bedding and prior to the placing of birds. Covering the bedding during outside storage can also help prevent contamination by wild birds that may harbour infectious disease (i.e. influenza A virus). This practice will also keep the bedding dry and will promote natural heating within the pile during warm dry weather. Overall, covering your outdoor litter pile will aid in mitigating the risk of virus survival.

**Poultry growers should immediately contact their veterinarian and board if their birds show any signs of illness.**

Visit the Feather Board Command Centre's website at [www.fbcc.ca](http://www.fbcc.ca) for more information.



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