



BIOSECURITY ADVICE FOR OWNERS OF LIVE POULTRY FOR THE PREVENTION OF AVIAN INFLUENZA

Produced by the National Disease Control Centre

Version 1

The implementation of stringent biosecurity is critically important for the prevention of an outbreak of Avian Influenza especially during periods of heightened risk. In order to ensure measures are effective, poultry owners should **assess the risk for their individual premises** and design their own biosecurity plan to include measures for the prevention and control of Avian Influenza. This will involve the preparation of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), detailing the preventative actions to be taken in key risk areas.ⁱ

The following are guidelines on the biosecurity measures that should be implemented on commercial poultry premises in times of heightened risk:

GENERAL BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN KEY RISK AREAS:

1. PERSONNEL AND VISITORS

- Only allow essential personnel and vehicles onto the poultry premises.
- Do not allow personnel access to live poultry unless absolutely necessary.
- Ensure staff and visitors coming into contact with live poultry wear disposable/ disinfectable personal protective equipment (PPE) – at least wellington boots (dedicated), disposable overalls and gloves.
- Ensure all staff and visitors wash their hands in hot water before and after being in contact with poultry or poultry products.
- Ensure footwear is cleaned and disinfected before entering and leaving all areas of the premises.
- Where possible ensure staff or personnel do not have contact with live poultry or other captive birds outside of the poultry premises. In situations where this is unavoidable, additional biosecurity measures must be taken to mitigate the spread of disease inwards or outwards e.g. full change of clothes, showering in and out, additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) etc.

2. POULTRY PREMISES

Buildings

- Ensure there is a good quality perimeter fence around the whole site with a single entrance and a lockable gate
- Ensure buildings are bird and rodent proof and doors kept closed at all times.
- Ensure yards and outdoor areas are kept clean and free from build up of feed, debris, stagnant water.
- Store dead birds in sealed, leak proof containers and leave the container at the perimeter of the premises for collection by the rendering plant.
- Store shavings, feed in a bird and rodent proof location.
- Implement and maintain a vermin control programme.

Wild Birds

- Ensure that all buildings used to house poultry, poultry products and feed **cannot be accessed by wild birds.**
- Where birdproof netting is used in outdoor areas it should not have apertures greater than 25mm.
- Ensure all feed and water stations are located indoors or under cover to prevent access by wild birds.
- Prevent poultry from getting near ponds, lakes or rivers by fencing off these areas.
- If using non mains water as drinking water for birds, it must be pre-treated to kill viruses e.g. chlorination.

Disinfection facilities

- Disinfectant footbaths must be in place at the entrance and exits of all buildings including at the entry/exit to each poultry house and they should be cleaned and replenished regularly and signage should be in place to ensure they are used.
- Disinfectant used must be from the DAFM [approved list of disinfectants](#).
- Ensure that all equipment used to feed, bed or transport poultry or poultry products has been cleaned and disinfected with an approved disinfectant before use e.g. cages, trolleys, trays, pallets and any other equipment. Do not accept wooden pallets or equipment which cannot be thoroughly disinfected that originated on other poultry premises onto the site.
- If there is an egg packing centre on the same site as live poultry, then boundaries between the two areas should be clearly marked and biosecurity measures for the separation of personnel, equipment must be in place.

3. MANAGEMENT OF LIVE POULTRY

- Never allow poultry to mix with or come into contact with poultry from other holdings.
- Operate an all in/all out stocking policy where possible and only buy birds from reputable sources.
- Separate ducks and geese from other poultry.
- Monitor poultry and keep records as follows:
 - Monitor and record feed consumption on a weekly basis and compare with industry norms.
 - Monitor and record drinking water consumption on a daily basis where possible and compare with industry norms.
 - Inspect all poultry on the premises at least once per day and record morbidity and mortality levels.
 - Monitor and record egg production levels on a daily basis and compare with industry norms.
 - Monitor for other clinical signs of disease including depression, coughing, sneezing, blue wattles/comb, diarrhoea.

Exercise vigilance and contact your Private Veterinary Practitioner if any of the above parameters are abnormal.

4. RECORD KEEPING

Accurate records assist in the forward and backward tracing to help identify the route of entry for the virus and can help to prevent further spread and control of the disease.

- Keep records of all visitors to the premises detailing their names and contact details including telephone numbers, dates of visits and areas of the premises that they visited.
- Keep records of all vehicles entering the premises including driver names, dates and times e.g. poultry transport vehicles, rendering plant vehicles, feed delivery vehicles etc.
- Keep records of waste disposal from the premises, including carcasses to rendering, detailing dates of waste consignments dispatched and their destinations (commercial documents).
- Keep records of all dispatches of poultry or poultry products from the premises including times, dates, numbers and destinations.

5. TRANSPORT VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

- Only allow vehicles/equipment that are visibly clean and free from contamination with organic material on to the premises.
- Vehicles used to transport poultry or poultry products should not enter poultry premises unless the interior, exterior and cab has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before arrival (verify with transport company/driver).
- Spray the wheels, wheel arches and the under body of vehicles and equipment with disinfectant before permitting entry to the premises.
- Ensure, where possible that vehicles park away from poultry houses and on a concrete apron to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.
- Disposable PPE and wellington boots should be worn by vehicle drivers while on the poultry premises (see also 1 above).
- PPE should include at least disposable overalls, overshoes and gloves.
- Drivers should not come into contact with poultry or enter poultry houses, unless absolutely necessary.
- Drivers should remove all disposable PPE and leave it on the farm before getting back in the cab.
- Spray the wheels, wheel arches and the under body of the vehicle and equipment with disinfectant prior to leaving the premises and there should be no visible contamination on the vehicle. The cab should be cleaned and disinfected on exit from the premises e.g. disinfectant wipes.
- Drivers should disinfect their footwear at the farm exit before departure.
- A knapsack containing an approved disinfectant should be carried on vehicles belonging to the poultry premises so that wheels can be disinfected before leaving any premises visited.

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ⁱ In order to assist flock owners with this process, under the current Rural Development Programme (2013-2020), funding is available to all broiler and layer poultry farmers, through the Targeted Advisory Service for Animal Health (TASAH) mechanism, to have a comprehensive and objective 'Biocheck.UGent' biosecurity review carried out on their farms by a trained private veterinary practitioner. Upon completion of the review, a tailored set of recommendations aimed at improving on-farm biosecurity is provided by the private veterinary practitioner to the farmer. This biosecurity review is **free of charge** to poultry farmers. Animal Health Ireland (AHI) delivers the TASAH funded biosecurity reviews on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). To avail of this free service, contact your private veterinary practitioner or Animal Health Ireland. **Please note that the**

Biocheck.UGent biosecurity reviews should not be carried out during periods of heightened disease risk, such as at present.