

Over the past several months, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has resulted in the depopulation of over 48 million birds. Biosecurity is the poultry industry's first line of defense to all avian diseases including HPAI. Continuous implementation of robust biosecurity practices protects not only the health and welfare of our birds, but also protects our livelihoods and will help ensure that proper indemnification is received in the case of a HPAI incident. The threat of the reemergence of HPAI in the fall of 2015 is real and has the potential to negatively impact the health and welfare of our birds if proper biosecurity practices are not in place. The following biosecurity measures have been identified as most important to prevent disease spread and promote flock health.

Limit visitors and minimize foot traffic: Visitors should be limited at all times. All visitors including company and non-company personnel must wear full PPE if they are to enter a broiler or broiler breeder house. Full PPE includes clean coveralls, clean boots or new disposable boot covers, gloves (or thorough hand disinfection), and hairnets. When on site, all visitors, company, and non-company personnel must employ a "No Shoes Touch the Ground" method where individuals put on disposable shoe covers prior to exiting their vehicle. Visitor logs and sign-in sheets should be maintained by facility staff. These sign in sheets should include the visitors' name, company, time of entry, confirmation of understanding of biosecurity requirements, time of departure, and contact information. Routine checks should be performed by flock supervisors to ensure compliance with the visitor policy. In addition, it is important to know if anyone who enters a broiler or broiler breeder house has had contact with other wild or domestic fowl – this should be considered when hiring additional laborers on the farm.

Avoid contact with wild or domestic fowl: Contact with wild birds, waterfowl, backyard poultry, pet birds, and show birds must be avoided. Any inadvertent contact with wild or domestic fowl requires a shower and change of clothes prior to entering farm premises. In addition, a 72 hour wait period before contact with company birds is suggested. Due to the prevalence of HPAI in waterfowl, duck and goose hunting activities are strongly discouraged. Should personnel choose to hunt, a shower and change of clothes prior to entering farm premises is required, and a 72 hour wait period before contact with company birds is suggested. Clothing and equipment used for hunting must never be worn or stored in or near the broiler or broiler breeder house.

Avoid sharing of farm equipment: Farm equipment may carry the HPAI virus especially if it is stored outside and uncovered. Given this potential risk, farm equipment should not be shared with other farms. If equipment sharing occurs, equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before it is brought onto another farm. It also must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before it is returned to the originating farm. Additionally, farm equipment – whether shared or not – must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to entering broiler or broiler breeder houses. Spraying rigs mounted on equipment and vehicles is an ideal way to clean and disinfect.

Each house or facility must have a clean and functioning footbath at each entrance: Any area outside a house or facility should be considered potentially contaminated with the HPAI virus or other impactful avian diseases. The inside of the house should be considered "clean" and managed accordingly. Foot baths must be present at the entrance to each house and must be used each and every time someone enters the individual house. Foot baths must contain a clean, fresh disinfectant which must be replenished as necessary to ensure adequate boot/shoe coverage. Buildup of organic material in the footbaths impacts their effectiveness so they must be cleaned out and refilled with clean, fresh disinfectant should this occur. It is highly recommended that outdoor foot baths be covered to maintain freshness, cleanliness, and effectiveness. A change of footwear for each house is a viable alternative to footbaths.

Feed and water sources must be covered and clean of contaminants: Uncovered or spilled feed is attractive to waterfowl, songbirds, rodents, and other pests. All feed must be kept sealed and covered to deter pests. Spilled feed must be cleaned up and disposed of as quickly as possible to avoid attracting waterfowl and pests to farm property. Spilled feed must never be fed to broilers or broiler breeders as it may have become contaminated on the ground. Ponds, streams, lagoons, and other surface water features are attractive to waterfowl, wild birds, and other wildlife. If a farm has a pond or surface water source on the property, steps should be taken to deter

wild bird traffic such as noise-makers and other startling techniques. It is not recommended to use surface water for drinking water, cleaning and disinfection, or cool cells on houses. If surface water is used for any of these purposes, the water must be treated with chlorine or other disinfectants. Daily monitoring must be performed to ensure the water is being properly cleaned and disinfected prior to use.

Pest management must be effectively practiced: Broiler and broiler breeder houses must be free of wild birds at all times. This includes birds and nests on the eaves of the outside of the house. Song birds in the U.S. have been confirmed to be infected with HPAI, so special care must be taken to make sure small birds do not find a way into the house. Additionally, houses and facilities must have a robust, written and fully-implemented plan for rodent control. This plan should include the use of bait stations, minimizing rodent harboring areas, and minimizing feed spillage. Areas inside and around the house should be inspected for signs of wild animals, where they may be able to gain entry, or where they have tried to gain entry.

Farms must be recognized as a protected area: All farms must have official signage clearly stating the area is a biosecure zone and any unauthorized entry is strictly prohibited. These signs must be posted at the entrances to the farm, as well as the main door of each house. Posting of such signs alerts the community to the importance of farm biosecurity and disease prevention.

Growers and farm personnel must be adequately trained in biosecurity and disease prevention: All growers, grower's family members, hired personnel, company personnel (flock supervisors and managers), and company crews (placement, vaccination, and movement) will adhere to their respective company's biosecurity policy. Training must be performed with all individuals to ensure understanding of biosecurity principles and the importance of adhering to the company's biosecurity policy. In addition, it is important for growers and farm personnel to have an understanding of the symptoms of HPAI, and to be able to respond appropriately if disease occurs. Unexplained mortality of over 2 per 1,000 birds after two weeks of age is considered a sign of clinical illness and must be reported immediately to the flock supervisor. Growers will need to work closely with their veterinarian and service personnel to follow quarantine and depopulation measures if necessary.