

# Department of Animal Science

## BIOSECURITY CHECKLIST FOR COMBATTING AVIAN INFLUENZA

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The reemergence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial poultry in the US has the attention of the Tennessee poultry industry. The industry is taking extra precautions and ratcheting up what was already extremely high levels of biosecurity. The USDA has developed a valuable checklist of biosecurity measures that, when followed, can help prevent HPAI from entering your poultry operation. Now is a good time to review and re-



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familiarize ourselves with sound biosecurity practices that are our best defense against an avian influenza outbreak. Multiple areas requiring attention are listed below, and these checklist practices will provide a solid foundation for protecting both commercial and backyard flocks across Tennessee and will help keep the Tennessee poultry industry safe from HPAI.

### Premises

- A comprehensive biosecurity plan has been developed, is being followed, and has been shared with all employees.
- Signs warning individuals not to enter the farm or any of its buildings because of disease control status (No Admittance; Restricted Area; Disease Control Site; Biosecurity Zone) are in place at the driveway entrance and on all buildings.
- Poultry are kept under roof and doors are kept locked at all times.
- Rodent control programs are in effect for all buildings on the farm. Rodents can carry numerous diseases and may move house-to-house or farm-to-farm.
- Poultry houses are bird-proofed against wild birds.

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- Poultry houses are secured against entrance of wildlife (skunks, opossums and other varmints) and procedures are in place to remove them from the house or other buildings on the farm should they gain entrance.
- Backyard poultry is prohibited for anyone that is a commercial producer or works on a commercial poultry farm.
- Pets such as dogs and cats are not allowed in chicken houses, egg rooms or egg processing areas.
- Feed bins are in good shape and are secured at all times to prevent contamination by wild birds or rodents. Spilled feed is cleaned up promptly to prevent attracting wild birds and rodents.
- Water supplies for drinkers and cool cells are from secure sources that cannot be accessed by wild birds or rodents. Avoid open-source water supplies (ponds, lakes, etc.).

### Equipment

- Footbaths; site-provided footwear; or site-provided boot covers, hair nets and disposable coveralls are available outside poultry houses. Use common sense with footbaths and change as needed to maintain effectiveness.
- Hand washing/sanitizing stations are available at each poultry house entrance.
- Avoid borrowing or sharing tools and equipment with neighbors. Any outside tools or equipment brought onto the farm are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to use and again before leaving the farm.
- Transport equipment (carts, loaders, ramps) is cleaned and disinfected prior to use.
- For egg-laying facilities, only clean, sanitized and disinfected plastic egg flats or new disposable egg flats are allowed on the premises.
- Equipment that has been cleaned and disinfected is protected from exposure to wild birds.

### Personnel

- Require everyone to clean and disinfect footwear or wear site-provided footwear or covers prior to entering chicken houses, processing areas and office areas.
- Require everyone to wash/sanitize their hands before entering and after leaving poultry houses and processing areas.
- All employees should receive biosecurity training when hired, and then annually after that. Records of all biosecurity training should be kept up to date.
- Require that employees do not own or go around backyard or other birds — including pet birds, domestic chickens, fighting chickens, ducks, geese, waterfowl, guineas, exotic birds, quail, partridge or pheasants.
- Require that employees sign a document when hired and during annual biosecurity training stating that they will avoid contact with other birds outside their place of employment. Employees should not move between sites at multiple-site operations.
- In the event contact is made with other birds, employees must agree that they will comply with a 72-hour waiting period prior to entry to any portion of the farm including barns, processing areas or office.
- Prohibit exposure to borrowed equipment from off-farm that has not been washed and disinfected.

- Avoid visiting rendering plants. Anyone visiting a rendering plant must shower and change clothes before entering the farm or any of its buildings.
- Spent hen removal crews should not be allowed access to other chicken houses or egg processing areas.

### Visitors

- Visitors should not enter the farm and do not enter the chicken houses unless necessary.
- A visitors logbook should be kept that records (1) visitor's name, (2) company affiliation, (3) time of entry, (4) statement confirming no contact with other birds or poultry during the preceding 3 days, (5) departure time and (6) telephone number.
- Anyone having contact with other birds during the preceding 72 hours are prohibited from entering chicken houses or egg processing areas.
- Disposable coveralls, shoe covers and hairnets are available and required for visitors/repair personnel to wear before entering barns, egg processing areas or other work areas.

### Vehicles

- All vehicles that have traveled to at-risk locations — poultry supply store, co-op, feed store, local café — should be properly cleaned and disinfected. This includes disinfection of the tires and undercarriage.
- Service technicians and integrator personnel that may make multiple farm visits each day must disinfect tires and undercarriage at each farm entrance after leaving the main road.
- Litter hauling trucks and cleanout equipment never go from one poultry farm to another on the same day. If required, litter trucks and cleanout equipment must be washed with soap and water and disinfected prior to arrival at the next farm.

### Wildlife

- Standing water is removed — grade roads and fill mud holes. Maintain proper grade and slope to ditches that carry water away from poultry houses. Use culverts if necessary.
- Risks at ponds and basins are properly managed. Do not use untreated surface water as a water source for poultry or for washing down and cleaning as it may be contaminated.
- Food sources are minimized. Do not feed wildlife. Wildlife feed such as grass seeds and insects are managed. Mow frequently, and do not store litter outside near poultry houses.
- All waste is covered at all times. Trash can lids are securely closed. Birds in composter are adequately covered to prevent varmints from removing mortality losses.
- Perches and nesting sites around houses are removed and all holes are plugged. Inspect foam insulation for rodent and bird damage. Note that it is unlawful to remove nests with eggs or young in them at any time of year.
- Decoys and scare devices (if used) are moved frequently to improve effectiveness.
- Experts do not recommend lethal removal of wild birds to prevent the spread of HPAI. Because of the high number and constant movement of wild birds, use of lethal methods is neither practical nor environmentally sound.

Following these critical biosecurity steps and checklist practices will help ensure the health and safety of Tennessee poultry flocks and the Tennessee poultry industry. Waterfowl migration

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routes and where ducks and geese may deposit the avian influenza virus are out of our control, but proven biosecurity practices are well within our control. Prevention is our best defense against an avian influenza outbreak and a strong biosecurity program at the farm level is our best method of prevention.



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