

Poultry Biosecurity for Fall Fairs

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Infosheet

AUGUST 2015

Poultry biosecurity is an important practice to limit the spread of disease. There are many viruses, bacteria and parasites that exist that can cause disease in birds. These can spread by direct bird contact or indirect contact with humans, housing and equipment. Some of these pathogens could be zoonotic and pose a human health risk. Pathogens of concern include *Salmonella enteritis*, *E. coli*, and avian influenza.

In April 2015, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of a H5N2 highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAI) on three commercial poultry farms in Oxford County, Ontario. Measures have been taken at these premises to destroy the virus, but there is still a risk to birds as avian influenza (AI) has been spreading across North America.

Avian influenza can infect domesticated and wild birds, including chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, pigeons and guinea fowl. AI can remain viable for long periods at low environmental temperatures, and cause severe illness and death in domestic birds, especially chickens and turkeys. Anyone in contact with domestic poultry species should follow enhanced biosecurity measures to reduce potential of transmission.

Birds become infected through direct contact with secretions or feces of infected birds, contaminated surfaces, or infected food and water supplies. It also may be possible for wild birds to transfer the virus mechanically on their feet, feathers or dander. While they may not appear sick, waterfowl are susceptible to infection with AI and can spread the virus. It is unknown how AI will affect wild turkeys or other gamebirds, thus it is important to maintain vigilance.

Those in contact with domestic poultry species should use the enhanced biosecurity measures listed below to reduce the potential for pathogen transmission. Co-mingling of birds from various flocks has the potential to increase risk of disease spread.

Prior to the Show (On-Farm)

- Inspect and ensure that the flock is healthy, free from disease/insect infestation.
- If disease issue is suspected or discovered, it is advised that the birds do not leave the premises. Consult a veterinarian for proper diagnosis.
- If a disease problem exists in the flock, do not attend a show.
- All carriers/boxes used in transporting birds should be cleaned and disinfected prior to departing for a show; fresh bedding should be added following this. Cardboard boxes should be discarded after a single use.
- Feed and water cups should be unused disposable (one time use) cups, or reusable cups that have been cleaned and disinfected prior to use at a show.

Before Birds Arrive at the Show

- Show management should disinfect the show hall, including cages, cage bottoms, facility walls, ceilings, floors, and any equipment by washing, spraying or fogging with a disinfectant, prior to adding the bedding material.
- Use only new and fresh bedding material that is dry and free from mold or other contaminants.
- All water and feed cups provided by show management should be disposable in nature, and discarded at the end of the show. Exhibitors may provide their own water and feed cups, provided that they are cleaned and disinfected.

At the Show

- All birds entering the show room should be inspected by show management prior to entrance to ensure that all birds are healthy. Any birds that are showing signs of disease should be removed *immediately. No exceptions.*
- Show management should exercise regular checks throughout the duration of the show to ensure that all birds remain healthy and take appropriate actions if a problem is detected.
- Hand sanitizer or sanitizer wipes should be used by those handling birds, including judges, clerks, participants and the general public. Sanitizer should be used before and after handling of each bird. Make hand sanitizer available for all participants of the show to utilize.
- Biosecurity floor mats containing a disinfectant should be used at all entrance/exit points of the show room.
- Only allow those who are exhibitors in the show to sell birds at the show. This protects birds at the event from having contact with birds of unknown disease status.
- Limit the numbers of birds per cage to ensure crowding and stress is controlled. Sales area bedding, water, and feed procedures should be the same as the show set up guidelines listed above.

After the Show

- If day old chicks are brought to the show for educational purposes, it would be advisable to get chicks from a hatchery that participates in the Ontario Hatchery Supply Flock Policy Program. Chicks should be euthanized after the show to limit the risk of disease spread.
- Any birds brought back from the show should be placed in a separate facility or room, for a quarantine period of at least 28 days. This is to prevent disease introduction.
- Report any disease issues present after returning home to your attending veterinarian, as well as show management.

Additional information is available at:

OMAFRA – Poultry Health Management and Biosecurity

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/poultry/health.html>

Ontario Hatchery Supply Flock Policy Program

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/ahw/onthatch-index.htm>

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