

Factsheet

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INTRODUCTION

Poultry biosecurity is an important practice to limit the spread of disease. There are many pathogens (viruses, bacteria and parasites) 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 are zoonotic and pose a human health risk. Pathogens of concern include *Salmonella*, *E. coli* and avian influenza. This factsheet describes enhanced biosecurity protocols to follow when showing poultry at shows to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

Avian influenza (AI) can infect domestic 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 the potential of transmission.

Birds become infected through direct contact with secretions or feces of infected birds, contaminated surfaces, or contaminated 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. Commingling of birds from different flocks increases the risk of disease spread.

Prior to the Show (On-Farm)

- Inspect and ensure that the flock is healthy and free from disease/insect infestation.
- If a disease issue is suspected or discovered, do not remove birds from the premises. Consult a veterinarian for proper diagnosis.
- If a disease problem exists in the flock, do not attend a show.
- Clean and disinfect all carriers/boxes used for transporting birds prior to departing for a show and before adding fresh bedding. Cardboard boxes should be discarded after a single use.
- Use disposable (one time use) cups for feed and water. If using reusable cups, ensure they 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 mould 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. Remove any birds showing signs of disease immediately. **No exceptions.**
- Show management should do regular checks throughout the duration of the show to ensure that all birds remain healthy and take appropriate actions if a problem is detected.
- Those handling birds should use hand sanitizer or sanitizer wipes. This includes judges, clerks, participants and the general public. Use sanitizer before and after handling of each bird. Make hand sanitizer available for all participants of the show to use.
- Use biosecurity floor mats containing a disinfectant at all entrance/exit points of the show room.
- Only allow exhibitors 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, source 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.
- To prevent disease introduction, 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.
- Report any disease issues present after returning home to your attending veterinarian, as well as show management.

Summary

Commingling of birds from different flocks increases the risk of disease spread. Anyone in contact with domestic poultry species should follow enhanced biosecurity measures to reduce the potential of transmission. Good biosecurity can limit the spread of disease.

Additional information is available on the OMAFRA website ontario.ca/livestock. Search for Poultry Health Management and Biosecurity and the Ontario Hatchery Supply Flock Policy Program.

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