

# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Biosecurity Checklist

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Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus is causing much concern across the U.S. poultry industry. All segments of the commercial poultry industry must have in place and continually follow comprehensive, stringent biosecurity practices. Biosecurity practices will significantly help prevent, mitigate, contain, and eradicate the HPAI virus.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has created a list of biosecurity measures to protect commercial and backyard flocks:

## Premises

- Develop and follow a premise-specific, comprehensive biosecurity plan. Share details with all employees.
- Post signs warning individuals not to enter the farm or any of its buildings because of disease control status (No Admittance, Restricted Area, Biosecurity Zone).
- Keep poultry under roof and house doors locked at all times.
- Have an effective rodent control program for all buildings on the farm.
- Secure poultry houses against wild or free-flying birds, including those nesting in eaves.
- Keep poultry houses secure from wildlife, such as skunks and opossums. Remove if they gain entrance.
- Avoid backyard birds if you are a commercial producer or employee.
- Keep pets away from chicken houses, egg rooms, and egg processing areas.
- Keep feed bins in good shape and secured at all times to prevent contamination by wild birds or rodents. Clean up spilled feed promptly.
- Make sure wild birds or rodents cannot access water supplies for drinkers and cool cells.

## Equipment

- Make footbaths, site-provided footwear/boot covers, hairnets, and disposable coveralls available outside poultry houses. Change footbaths frequently.
- Have hand-washing/sanitizing stations available at each poultry house entrance.
- Avoid borrowing or sharing tools and equipment with neighbors. Clean and disinfect any off-farm tools or equipment before use and again before leaving the farm.

- Clean and disinfect chicken transport equipment (carts, loaders, ramps) before use unless removing all poultry from the premises.
- Only allow clean, sanitized, and disinfected plastic egg flats or new disposable egg flats on the egg-laying premises.
- Protect cleaned and disinfected equipment from exposure to wild birds.
- Disinfect anything rolled into poultry houses while animals are present. Disinfect surfaces contacting the ground.

## Personnel

- Require everyone to clean and disinfect footwear or wear site-provided footwear or covers before 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.
- Train all employees on biosecurity when hired, and annually after that. Keep biosecurity training records up to date.
- Avoid backyard or other birds—including pet birds, domestic chickens, fighting chickens, ducks, geese, waterfowl, guineas, exotic birds, quail, partridge, or pheasants, if raising commercial poultry.
- Comply with a 3-day waiting period before entry to any portion of the farm if contact is made with other birds.
- Avoid exposure to borrowed off-farm equipment that has not been washed/disinfected.
- Avoid visiting rendering plants. Anyone visiting a rendering plant must shower and change clothes before entering the farm or any of its buildings unless the flock is leaving the premises.
- Do not allow spent hen removal crews access to other chicken houses or egg processing areas.

## Visitors

- Do not let visitors enter the farm or chicken houses unless absolutely necessary.
- Keep a visitors logbook 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) contact telephone number.

- ❑ Wear disposable coveralls/shoe covers/hairnets before entering barns, egg processing areas, or other work areas.

## Vehicles

- ❑ Clean and disinfect all vehicles that have traveled to at-risk locations—poultry supply store, co-op, feed store, café, and so forth. This includes disinfection of the tires and undercarriage.
- ❑ Disinfect tires and undercarriage at the farm entrance after leaving the main road.
- ❑ Avoid going from one poultry farm to another while birds are on the farm. If required, wash litter trucks and cleanout equipment with soap and water and disinfect before arrival at the next farm.

## Wildlife

- ❑ Remove standing water—grade roads and fill mud holes. Maintain proper grade and slope to ditches that carry water away from poultry houses. Use culverts if necessary.
- ❑ Manage risks at ponds and basins properly. Do not use untreated surface water as a water source for poultry or for washing down/cleaning.
- ❑ Minimize food sources. Do not feed wildlife. Manage wildlife feed, such as grass seeds and insects. Mow frequently, and do not store litter outside near poultry houses.

- ❑ Cover waste at all times. Securely close trash can lids. Cover birds in compost to prevent scavengers from removing mortality losses.
- ❑ Remove perches/nesting sites around houses, and plug all holes. 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.
- ❑ Move decoys and scare devices (if used) frequently to improve effectiveness.
- ❑ Avoid lethal removal of wild birds to prevent the spread of HPAI. Because of the high number and constant movement of wild birds, the use of lethal methods is neither practical nor environmentally sound.

These steps will help ensure the health and safety of Mississippi poultry flocks and the multi-billion dollar Mississippi poultry industry. Normal daily mortality should not be reported because this will only slow officials in trying to determine the actual disease status. However, a drastic change in flock health status or sudden large increase in mortality should be reported.

**Commercial producers should contact their service technicians for guidance and assistance at the first sign of a potential disease issue.**



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This information was developed, adapted, and approved for use in Mississippi by Tom Tabler, Extension Professor, Poultry Science, and Brigid Elchos, Deputy State Veterinarian, Mississippi Board of Animal Health. Some information is adapted from USDA-APHIS publications *Prevent Avian Influenza at Your Farm: Improve Your Biosecurity with Simple Wildlife Management Practices*, *Avian Influenza Findings Emphasize the Need for Good Biosecurity*, and *HPAI Biosecurity Checklist*.

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