Influenza and Biosecurity: Not Just for the Birds

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a very contagious and often deadly respiratory disease of poultry, such as chickens, turkeys, and geese. It is often spread by wild birds and can make other animals sick too.

You can protect your birds and other animals from HPAI with good biosecurity. Simply put, biosecurity refers to everything people do to keep diseases away from animals, property, and people.

Limit visitors

- Only allow people on farm who need to be there.
- Use only one entrance and exit for the farm.
- Keep a record of all farm visitors.

Keep germs away

- Give visitors disposable shoe covers to wear on the farm.
- Keep a separate pair of boots for use on the farm around your animals.
- Use a footbath with a disinfectant solution (4 ounces of bleach in 1 gallon of water) to clean footwear before entering the farm.
- Spray disinfectant on all vehicle and trailer tires before returning to the farm.
- Don't borrow tools or equipment from other farms.
- Don't use untreated water from ponds or streams.

Avoid mixing species

- Keep other animals and strangers off the property.
- Keep livestock and pets away from birds, including bird feed, litter, or equipment.
- Keep birds out of animal pens and barns.
- Keep all wild animals (including rats and mice) away from bird and livestock areas.

Look out for sick animals

Check animals regularly for the following signs of illness:

- Coughing ("barking"), sneezing, or trouble breathing
- Discharge from eyes or nose
- Difficulty moving, walking, or standing upright
- Lack of appetite
- Severe illness in multiple animals
- Sudden or unexplained deaths

If your animals look sick, take action!

Isolate sick animals and report them to your veterinarian and/or State and Federal animal health officials.

Your veterinarian will determine if your animals might have HPAI. They may contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture or your State Animal Health Official to test your animals.