

## Recommendations for Poultry Events During a Period of Heightened Avian Influenza Risk

Avian Influenza (AI) is a contagious viral infection that can affect several species of food-producing birds as well as pet birds and wild birds. Avian Influenza has been circulating in Canada since December 2021.

### How is the disease spread?

Wild birds, especially waterfowl, are natural reservoirs for AI. They may not be affected by the disease but can transmit it to domestic birds. The disease can be spread by:

- direct contact with infected birds
- contaminated feed and water, equipment, clothing, footwear, and poultry litter

**The risk for AI is highest when wild birds are migrating. Therefore, the lowest risk period is from late May to early September. Though the risk is always present, and precautions need to be taken, this is the period of time that is recommended to host any poultry events.**

If occurrences of AI in the region increase, canceling poultry events are recommended.

### Clinical signs of the disease in birds

- Sudden death
- Lack of energy, movement, or appetite
- Decreased egg production or laying soft-shelled eggs
- Swelling and discoloration around the head, neck, or eyes
- Nervous signs, tremors, or lack of coordination
- Coughing, gasping for air, or sneezing
- Diarrhea

### Risk to humans

Avian influenza viruses such as highly pathogenic H5N1 may, on rare occasions, cause disease in humans. Transmission to humans has occurred through close contact with infected birds or heavily contaminated environments. Symptoms in humans include red, itchy, or burning eyes or flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, or aches).

### Control measures

Prevention is best achieved through strict biosecurity measures designed to protect birds from AI and other common poultry diseases.

Be aware that AI (especially in waterfowl), and some other diseases can be present in apparently healthy birds with no history of the disease.

## Control Measures for Poultry Events

1. Sites should not be located near ponds, wetlands, or areas where wild birds especially waterfowl congregate.
2. Prevent exposure of sites to wild birds, especially waterfowl.
3. All birds that attend a poultry event should be housed indoors, where there is no access to wild birds, for 2 weeks prior to arrival at the site.
4. Do not allow any bird appearing unwell to enter the site.
5. Domestic poultry, game birds and waterfowl should not co-mingle or have shared contact with people or equipment.
  - This is best achieved by hosting separate events.
  - Alternatively, have each species show on one day followed by another species with cleaning and disinfection of the site between species.
    - Ex. Domestic poultry shows on day 1 and then vacates premises. The site is cleaned and disinfected. Game birds arrive on day 2, vacate and the site is disinfected. Waterfowl arrive on day 3 with site disinfection when they vacate.
  - Another alternative would be to house different species in separate venues and not allow contact between the birds or people handling the birds. The public should visit only one venue or traffic flow should proceed from domestic poultry to game birds to waterfowl with no reversals in flow.
6. Poultry housing at the site should belong to the venue and be cleaned and disinfected. If not possible:
  - Any cages or carriers coming from off-site should be cleaned and disinfected prior to birds entering for transportation to the site.
  - Preferable that external cages and carriers do not remain on site but if needed must arrive clean and be disinfected.
7. Maintain high sanitation standards.
  - Do not share equipment between birds
  - Control rodents
  - Keep feed in closed containers and clean feed spills immediately
  - Minimize debris around facilities
  - Ensure water is from a potable water source
  - Ensure bedding has not been contaminated by wild birds or other animals
  - Instruct exhibitors to arrive in clean clothing and footwear and not to park vehicles close to the exhibition building unless they have been washed free of farm debris before arrival.
8. All birds should be observed twice daily for any signs of disease
  - Contact a veterinarian if any signs of disease are observed.
  - Immediately restrict access to the poultry site to limited essential personnel who follow enhanced biosecurity if disease is suspected. Ensure appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is on-site should this occur. Ex. Disposable coveralls and boot coverings, masks, and eye protection.

**Public risk involves both the public exposing the birds to disease and vice versa. In a public venue, this cannot be eliminated. The following steps are recommended:**

1. Discourage public contact with the birds
2. Post signage notifying the public of Avian Influenza risk
  - Ensure entry to bird areas is controlled to make the public aware of the risk. You can use bright orange duct tape on the floor and walls to illustrate the boundaries.
  - Do not enter if:
    - You are wearing footwear or clothing exposed to other birds
    - You are wearing footwear that is not clean
    - You are feeling unwell
3. Footbaths
  - Footbaths may be used to disinfect footwear but have **limitations**.
  - They create awareness of risk but also a false sense of security.
  - They only work if free of organic matter, are clean, and contain an approved disinfectant. They must be maintained and changed frequently.
  - People commonly avoid stepping into footbaths or simply step through without stopping to clean footwear.
  - Consider having a brush, water, and detergent available as additional cleaning for people with organic matter present on footwear.
  - If used should be located at the entrance and exit of the facility.
  - Disposable boot covers are a suitable alternative.
4. Hand Sanitation
  - Recommend handwashing or hand sanitation prior to entering and when leaving the venue.

## **Control measures for birds returning from poultry events**

Poultry owners should take the following precautions:

### **1. Quarantine new or returning birds**

- This helps prevent many diseases. **Note that birds with AI may not have clinical signs.**
- Quarantine new or returning birds for a minimum of 2 weeks before mixing with your flock.
- Quarantine in a separate building to prevent direct bird-to-bird contact.
- Observe birds for abnormal behavior. Be familiar with normal behaviors.
- Handle and manage (feed, water, cleaning) quarantined birds last using separate clothing and equipment (Proper traffic flow is essential).
- Maintain high sanitation standards.

2. Follow a biosecurity plan to prevent wild birds from coming into contact with poultry, as well as with their food and water.
  - Maintain strict control over access to poultry houses, limiting access to people who must be there.
  - Require that all persons who enter the site where poultry are held disinfect their footwear, wash their hands, and wear clean clothing. Wearing a face mask and hair net are additional options to request.
  - Make sure that equipment is cleaned and disinfected before taking it into poultry houses.
  - Avoid having bird feeders and duck ponds close to poultry barns because they attract wild birds.

### **Report suspicious cases to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)**

In Canada, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and low pathogenicity H5 and H7 avian influenza viruses are considered to be notifiable and is a reportable disease for domestic birds under the federal *Health of Animals Act*. All suspected cases must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) through your nearest CFIA Animal Health Office.

New Brunswick Hotline 1-800-442-2342

Atlantic Hotline 1-506-381-7683

## Appendix Cleaning and Disinfection:

### Step 1: Dry cleaning

- All organic matter must be removed physically from all equipment and surfaces including walls, floors, cages, and parts of cages or carriers-including joint spaces.
- This is the most crucial step as it removes most infectious particles and allows disinfectants to work.

### Step 2: Wet cleaning

- Scrub entire areas with detergent and water, and rinse well.
- The step removes any organic matter still present as well as any biofilms.

### Step 3: Drying

- Allow surfaces to dry thoroughly. Supplemental heat may be used to assist.
- Drying assists in the inactivation of pathogens.

### Step 4: Disinfection

- Spray thoroughly with viral/bacterial/fungal disinfectant.
- You can incorporate ultraviolet light to bring additional disinfectant insurance.

### Step 5: Drying post disinfection

- Allow surfaces to dry thoroughly.

### Disinfectant information:

The following are examples of disinfectants effective against Avian Influenza:

1. Concentrated Bleach (Sodium Hypochlorite)

- Household sodium hypochlorite concentration is generally 5-6%. A dilution of 1 part of bleach and 4 parts of water (1/5 solution) should be used.

2. VIRKON™ follow label directions. Effective at 1% concentration on surfaces and footbaths.

3. PREvail™ (accelerated hydrogen peroxide) manufactured by Virox. Follow label directions of the disinfectant. Consideration of using 1/16 dilution and 10-20 minutes contact time in cold weather.

4. NEUTRAQUAT 256 (Quaternary Ammonium Compound) manufactured by Amano Pioneer Eclipse Corporation. Follow label directions.

5. Quat-3 (Quaternary Ammonium Compound) manufactured by Wood Wyant. Follow label directions.

6. VERT2GO SABER Concentrated (Hydrogen Peroxide) manufactured by Wood Wyant. Follow label directions.

7. SANIDATE 5.0 sanitizer/disinfectant (Hydrogen Peroxide and Peracetic Acid) manufactured by Biosafe Systems Llc. Follow label directions.

8. Vesphene® IIIse Phenolic Disinfectant (Phenol) manufactured by Steris Corporation. Follow label directions