

Biosecurity Fact Sheet:

Good chicken farming practices make good sense.

Livestock disease can be catastrophic for farmers and the farming industry through the loss of income and the loss of markets.

Following good livestock farming practices is the best and simplest way to achieving biosecurity – to protect your flocks, your profits and your industry.

Q What is biosecurity?

A Biosecurity refers to various management practices that reduce the risk of introducing disease onto your farm. You can protect the future of your farm, and also the wider industry, by recognising the importance of biosecurity in the day-to-day running of your property.

It is in your best interest to ensure that all potential risks are identified and managed. The likelihood of animal diseases occurring can be reduced by good farm hygiene practices, conducting routine careful inspections, managing visitors and contractors, and bird and rodent control as well as developing a general animal health program.

Q What is a biosecurity plan?

A A biosecurity plan is essentially a set of commonsense principles that you recognise and consider in the daily operations of your property. It is not onerous nor bureaucratic, but is essentially good management practice. The checklist of potential risks (overleaf) is a useful starting point. In addition, the ACMF has developed a National Biosecurity Manual for Contract Meat Chicken Farming which is available from its website – www.chicken.org.au

Q How will reporting suspicious signs of disease help me?

A If you see signs of a new or suspicious disease in your flock, it is possible that other birds could be incubating the disease, and control measures should be implemented as quickly as possible to prevent costly losses.

Your report will be taken seriously and the appropriate resources will be applied to investigate the disease – how it got into your flock and how to prevent its spread. Limiting the spread of the disease will save you time and money, and may well protect your industry as a whole.

It is in your interest to promptly report any unusual signs or unexpected deaths in your flock. Failure to do so could result in penalties – and certainly wouldn't be appreciated by your neighbours and others in your industry.

Q Australia has strict quarantine requirements at airports etc. – isn't that enough protection?

A While Australia is currently free from a number of harmful diseases, we can't assume that this will always be the case. With people, animals and products moving around the world so rapidly, there is an increasing risk of foreign diseases being introduced. This means Australia's quarantine barriers are under increasing pressure, requiring everyone to be vigilant about the threat of disease.

Within Australia, various movement controls also aim to reduce the spread of animal diseases. However, the first and most effective protection for your property and livestock is your own biosecurity plan that identifies and deals with the major risks.

Q Where can I get more information about emergency animal diseases and the systems in place to prevent and deal with outbreaks?

A A wealth of information is available on the internet. Websites of particular relevance include:

www.outbreak.gov.au

www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au

www.chicken.org.au



How to stop disease – Keep your farm clean!

Use this simple checklist to help you identify biosecurity priorities for avian influenza, and other diseases

Wild birds are a major risk, particularly for avian influenza:	
Keep wild birds away from your birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that sheds/aviaries effectively exclude wild birds. ● Remove objects that attract wild birds, e.g. feed, water, ponds and roosting places.
Ensure clean water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Untreated water that wild birds have accessed is a major risk – use town or bore water. ● If dam or other surface water must be used, then filter out sediments, treat with chlorine and let it stand for two hours before providing to poultry.
Keep feed secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Store feed, and feed it out, in a manner that avoids contamination from wild birds.
In the case of free-range birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent access to possible sources of standing water used by wild birds. ● Provide feed and water in sheds to deter mixing with wild birds.
Good on-farm biosecurity keeps diseases out:	
Don't bring infection onto your property, or spread it around your premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infection may be carried on your clothes, footwear or hands. Wear clean overalls and footwear when entering bird sites. Use disinfectant footbaths before entering sheds.
Strictly limit and control access to poultry flocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The site should be fenced with a controlled entry point.. ● Record who has visited and their contact details.
Feed storage must be sealed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent wild birds and other animals contaminating feed. ● A rodent control program should be in place.
All used equipment is a potential source of contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not share equipment (e.g. vaccination, travel cages) with other poultry producers or bird-keepers. ● Thoroughly disinfect equipment prior to entry onto your farm.
Proper disposal of dead birds, litter and reject eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dead birds (especially where the cause of death is uncertain) and litter are a potential source of contamination. ● Develop suitable disposal plans.

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The National Biosecurity Manual is available from www.chicken.org.au
 Australian Chicken Meat Federation Inc.
 phone: (02) 9929 4077 email: acmf@chicken.org.au



Look. Check. Ask a Vet.