



Recommended Practices for Fair Organizers: **To Minimize the Risk of Avian Influenza at Poultry Shows and Exhibitions**

Standard biosecurity practices (*disease prevention measures*) are important for Alaska's poultry owners and there is currently a heightened level of risk because of the ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak across the country. Wild waterfowl are natural reservoirs for the avian influenza virus and can shed and spread the disease without showing signs of illness. Because of the potential for transmission from wildlife, HPAI has become a significant concern for all poultry producers and 4-H participants who take their birds to fairs, shows, and exhibitions which could increase the potential for the disease to spread.

The Office of the State Veterinarian recommends that poultry owners and event organizers increase their current level of disease prevention practices as detailed below. Biosecurity measures help to keep your flock safe from HPAI as well as other bird diseases.

Steps to Take BEFORE the Fair

Communication with exhibitors for birds at the Fair

- The fair staff should consider having a meeting with exhibitors (and their family members) prior to the start of the exhibition to provide general instructions such as:
 - Contact information for the designated Barn Supervisor and exhibition veterinarian.
 - Instructions on how to keep animal records, report bird illnesses and explain any specific actions that may be required if a bird becomes sick at the fair.
 - A review of fair regulations and procedures.
- Discuss general poultry biosecurity practices:
 - Minimize contact with other flocks, including movement of people from flock to flock. (<http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>).
 - This includes the daily monitoring of the birds during the show, as well as recommendations for when the exhibitor returns home (keep fair birds separate from the home flock for at least a week).
 - You may provide a fact sheet related to highly pathogenic avian influenza. (See http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/docs/vet/HPAI/HPAI%202015%20Q_A_4_1_15.pdf).

Exhibit set-up

- Arrange the event to minimize contact between exhibition birds and wild birds, wild waterfowl and pests (rodents, etc. since they may carry pathogens that affect birds and people).



- Arrange to house exhibition poultry indoors or if out of doors provide netting or screens to minimize contact with wild birds.
- Keep feed and water in the bird pens. Cover feed containers and remove any waste feed and eliminate water sources that may attract wild birds and pests.
- Limit the time exhibition birds are congregated and co-mingled at an exhibition. Ideally, different species (chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese) should be kept in different sections at the exhibition.
 - Best to keep waterfowl (ducks, geese) with a good separation from other poultry species.
 - May want to consider minimizing the total time birds are on the fair grounds.
- Do not share any equipment, feed, bedding, food or water bowls.
- Exhibitors should have access to an area where they may wash and disinfect hands, equipment, foot wear and food and water bowls.

Bird health

- Make arrangements to have a local veterinarian who will be present or on call during the fair to address any concerns or questions.
- The exhibitors will be responsible for daily monitoring the animals for clinical signs. They should consult the veterinarian to check any animals that exhibit abnormal behavior or signs of illness.
- The veterinarian will be responsible for taking additional steps as needed to minimize the risk disease in the birds and preventing any spread.
- There should be a protocol to immediately remove sick birds from the exhibition area and isolate them away from other birds. This protocol should include a designated isolation pen/area where there is no contact with any other birds, good sanitation or Biosecurity plan, and minimal contact with humans.
- There should be a system to maintain records that list the owner information, farm address, individual bird identification and daily barn health record. This information will help with the speed and accuracy of an animal disease investigation associated with any outbreak at the exhibition. **An example of a daily health record will be provided by Fair Staff.**
- Consider all the consequences, and have a plan for how you will proceed, if there are birds that become sick or die while at the fair.

Measures to reduce likelihood that people acquire infections or spread disease

- Make sure you have hand wash stations and signage related to possible zoonotic disease issues in the animal barns.
- There should be no food or beverages allowed in the barn.



- Host non-animal-related activities (i.e., dances, pizza parties, etc.) in locations other than animal barns.

Examples of Signs for Public Display

- No Food Allowed in the animal barn
- Do not feed the animals
- Wash your hands before and after entering the animal barn.

Communication plans

- Establish methods to rapidly communicate (i.e., email addresses and/or phone numbers from show entry information, social media channels, etc.) with exhibitors about procedural changes or incidents associated with the exhibition.
- If there is a disease outbreak or animal injury that requires you to restrict public access to the animal area have set protocols established and available that barn managers can follow as well as signs ready to post. This will avoid confusion or panic among the exhibitors and the public.

DURING the Exhibition

- Ensure that all birds are adequately identified and that identification, along with name and on-site contact information for owner(s), is recorded when exhibitors check in at the show or exhibition
- Consider requiring exhibitors to provide a “poultry health declaration” upon arrival at the show or exhibition, stating:
 - No known exposure of your flock to sick birds, and no poultry deaths on your premises, within the past 10 days
 - No clinical signs of illness, including respiratory or neurologic disease, within the past 10 days (see list below)
- If a bird shows clinical signs of illness consistent with influenza or other disease or is found dead: exhibition staff should be notified as soon as possible, the bird should be removed from contact with other birds and the public, and the bird should be examined and if necessary tested for avian influenza.

The clinical signs of avian influenza are:

- Sudden death
- Wheezing, coughing, nasal discharge
- Depressed attitude, decreased feed intake
- Drop in egg production or egg quality
- Swelling and/or discoloration of eyes, head, neck
- Tremors, circling, drooping wings, twisting of head and neck



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- Fair staff should contact the veterinarian on call or the State Veterinarian if there is more than one sick bird or unusual bird deaths.
- Keep record of the arrival and departure dates/times for each animal at the fair.

Measures to reduce likelihood that people acquire infections or spread disease

- Provide easy access to hand washing stations
- Post informational signage that includes the following messages:
 - No eating, smoking or drinking in the animal areas
 - Wash hands frequently, before entering and upon exiting the animal areas
 - No pacifiers, sipping cups or strollers in the animal areas

AFTER the Exhibition

- When taking birds home isolate and observe for illness before allowing contact with other animals:
 - The isolation/observation period for clinical signs of illness should be at least one week two weeks is ideal.
 - Take care of the birds and animals that did not go to the fair first and then care for the isolated birds that attended the fair.
 - Clean and disinfect equipment, clothing, shoes, and vehicles/trailers that were at the exhibition. Allow all cleaned and disinfected items to dry completely before re-use or restocking.
 - Contact your veterinarian, 4-H leader or Cooperative Extension agent if your birds become sick.

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