



## **Recommended Practices for Exhibitors:** **To Minimize Transmission 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**

#### *Biosecurity*

- Consult a veterinarian, 4-H leader, or cooperative extension agent to understand and develop a biosecurity and bird health management plan at home.
- Minimize contact with wild birds and waterfowl.
  - Remove food and water sources that may attract wild birds.
- Keep the number of people who have contact with your birds to a minimum; particularly limit contact between your flock and other people who own birds.
- Keep your distance from other poultry flocks and wild birds, especially wild waterfowl.
- Keep tools and equipment clean.
  - Clean cages and food and water containers daily, dispose of waste properly.
- Wash hands with soap and water and wear clean boots before and after working with your birds
  - Consider having dedicated boots and clothing for working with your flock

#### *Bird health*

- Know the clinical signs of highly pathogenic avian influenza in birds:
  - 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



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- Tremors, circling, drooping wings, twisting of head and neck
- Call a veterinarian, 4-H leader or Cooperative Extension for assistance if a bird becomes sick
  - Isolate sick birds by moving them away from other birds and placing in a separate pen.
    - Tend to sick birds after taking care of healthy birds.
  - If any birds exhibit illness at home or on the farm within 14 days prior to start of the show, fair, exhibit, NO birds (healthy or sick) from your flock should be taken to the event.
- Ask the exhibition organizer about any specific actions that may be required if a bird becomes sick at the show.

### DURING the Exhibition

- Clean cages, food, and water containers daily and record this on your animals health chart.
- Do not share equipment, feed or water bowls, feed with other exhibitors.
- Minimize contact between your birds and other birds as much as possible.
- Minimize your own contact with other birds.
- Minimize the number of people who have contact with your birds.
- Observe birds daily for signs of influenza-like illness.
- Report any influenza-like illness to the designated exhibition veterinarian or the appropriate exhibition staff or on call veterinarian so the bird can be examined
- Birds that appear sick should be removed from the exhibition to the isolation or hospital pens immediately.

### AFTER the Exhibition

- Isolate and observe birds for illness after returning home and before allowing contact with other animals. Observe for clinical signs of illness for 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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