

# MU Guide

## Prevention of Poultry Disease

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An adequate disease prevention program is essential to a profitable commercial poultry operation. Chronic diseases can reduce efficiency and increase costs. Although a disease prevention program may not show immediate returns on the investment, it will be profitable in the long term.

### Sources of disease

Humans, whether as visitors, neighbors or farm workers, can be a major source of disease transmission. Carriers can include employees who work on several poultry farms and equipment that moves between farms.

Poultry brought to the farm can carry infectious diseases. Day-old chicks or poults, pet birds, replacement pullets, cull or sickpen birds, or birds of different ages or species are all possible sources of contamination. Wild birds may carry and transmit diseases to commercial poultry flocks. Certain disease organisms, such as salmonella and coliforms, may be transmitted from the dam to the offspring through the egg.

Poor sanitation also can cause disease problems. Once a site is contaminated, carry-over from previously infected flocks may become a reoccurring problem.

Disease outbreaks are influenced by the general condition of the flock. Conditions caused by poor management can reduce the flock's resistance to infection.

### Disease prevention

Proper security measures can greatly reduce the chance of disease outbreaks. Use disinfectant foot baths or wear plastic foot coverings when entering buildings. Change foot baths often to keep them effective. If you use equipment for more than one flock, wash and disinfect it before introducing another flock or using it in another building.

Only bring in poultry from disease-free flocks. Secure your facilities from wild birds. Don't keep pet birds on the premises, and avoid contact with other flocks.

Practice "all in, all out" with flocks whenever

possible. Thorough cleaning and disinfecting between flocks will help reduce outbreaks. Include a period of down time (two weeks minimum) in your flock schedule. Removal of built-up litter may be necessary if a disease outbreak has occurred.

To prevent spread of disease, control rodents and insects, keep buildings clean and dispose of dead birds. Clean and disinfect the facilities in the following manner:

1. Remove all birds from the building. Clean out the old feed and remove all movable equipment.
2. Hose the ceilings and walls before removing litter. Dispose of litter as far from the house as possible.
3. Clean equipment and all items to be reused and repair building if needed.
4. Wash the house thoroughly with a high-pressure wash to remove all manure deposits.
5. Disinfect with a water-soluble compound such as quaternary ammonia, phenol compound, iodophor, coal tar or a chlorine disinfectant.
6. Apply an insecticide approved for poultry use.
7. Replace the litter and return equipment.
8. Lock the building and let it stand empty for two to four weeks.

Maintain proper management techniques that do not stress the birds. Good ventilation, dry litter and proper temperatures will provide conditions conducive to good health.

Follow an approved vaccination program.

### References

- Hofstad, M. S. 1984. *Diseases of Poultry*. Iowa State University Press.
- Schwartz, L. D. 1988. *Poultry Health Handbook*. College of Agriculture, Pennsylvania State University.



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