2019
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
POULTRY CALENDAR
FEATURING PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE POULTRY PHOTO CONTEST
JANUARY 2019

Biosecurity & Disease Prevention: LOOK for signs, REPORT sick birds, PROTECT your birds!
Chickens are omnivores, meaning they eat seeds and insects, but also eat mice and lizards.
Consistent biosecurity practices are the best way to prevent diseases.
Biosecurity For Your Birds’ Health

Apparentlky healthy “carrier” birds may transmit a number of serious poultry diseases. Nebraska needs to be proactive and diligent to protect our poultry producers.

The best way to prevent infection of your flock with these diseases is to adhere to the principles of “biosecurity.” Keep your birds isolated from other birds and practice all-in, all-out management.

Fairs and shows are a breakdown in basic biosecurity. Minimizing direct and indirect contact between birds at the show will decrease the likelihood of disease transmission. Instituting a three-week quarantine on all birds returning to the flock will also reduce risk. Evaluate your level of biosecurity by answering the questions below: How many questions can you answer yes? A no answer may indicate an area for improved biosecurity efforts.

New introductions
1. Do you limit poultry purchases to a few sources with known and trusted flock health programs?  Yes  No
2. Do you segregate new additions to your flock?  Yes  No
   If yes, how long do you segregate? _______ (Optimum time is 30 days.)

Family education
1. Have you educated yourself and trained your family to recognize and report sick birds?  Yes  No

Neighbors
1. Do you restrict sharing equipment with your neighbors?  Yes  No
2. After contact with your neighbors’ poultry, do you wash and disinfect boots; change and wash coveralls, hats, and other clothing before contact with your own birds?  Yes  No

Record keeping
1. Do you maintain a record of where you purchase and sell birds?  Yes  No
   (Records help animal health authorities trace the origin or destination of affected birds during a disease outbreak.)

Animal health
1. Do you call your veterinarian to investigate poultry that do not respond to treatment, display unusual disease symptoms, or die?  Yes  No
2. Do you clean equipment and boots, change clothing, and wash hands when moving between poultry groups of different health status and age?  Yes  No
3. Does your poultry house protect against heat, cold, and rain? Is it well ventilated and dry?  Yes  No
4. Is feed stored in a clean, dry, and cool location?  Yes  No

Cleaning and disinfection
1. Do you wash and disinfect houses and equipment before bringing in a new flock of birds?  Yes  No
2. If equipment must be shared, do you wash it in warm soapy water and disinfect it before using on other farm animals?  Yes  No
3. Do you thoroughly clean all equipment to remove any visible debris (manure, dirt, and bedding) before applying a disinfectant?  Yes  No
4. Do you mix disinfectant according to the product label?  Yes  No
5. Do you allow a disinfection solution to have adequate contact time?  Yes  No

A “Protect Your Flock, Biosecurity Pays” video is available at: www.nda.nebraska.gov/animal/avian

Photo: Joshua Eisenmann

Photo: Justin Eisenmann
Don’t kiss the chicks! Salmonella can be spread through contact with poultry.
Did you know? There are estimated to be more than 25 billion chickens in the world.
Isolate new birds and birds returning from shows for at least 30 days before joining the flock.
Poultry Disease Reporting

Look for signs
Look for these warning signs of disease in your birds:

- Sudden increase in the number of deaths;
- Sneezing, gasping for air or coughing;
- Watery and green diarrhea;
- Lack of energy and poor appetite;
- Drop in egg production or soft, missshapen eggs;
- Swelling around the eyes, neck and head;
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, comb and legs; and
- Tremors, drooping wings, circling or twisting of the head and neck.

If disease strikes, quick identification of the cause and appropriate treatment can prevent a minor condition from becoming a major disaster.

It would be fortunate if we could tell the cause of a disease by the symptoms in sick birds. However, this is often not the case. Examining the bird after death (a necropsy) is often the best way to determine the cause of disease. Your veterinarian may perform such an examination. Otherwise, whole birds or appropriate samples will be submitted to the University of Nebraska Veterinary Diagnostic Center (UNL-VDC). Further testing (at owner’s expense) may be needed to complete the diagnosis.

Report sick birds
Report sick birds to your veterinarian or NDA Animal and Plant Health Protection (800-831-0550) as soon as you notice severe illness or unexplained death in your flock. We may test the sick birds or arrange for a necropsy to be done.

Protect your birds
Let us know where your birds are located and how to contact you in the case of a disease emergency.

If we know where birds are located, we can:

- Alert bird owners in the program about the outbreak.
- Contact bird owners near the infection zone.
- Inform bird owners in the zone that their poultry will be tested.

Please list your birds’ location and your contact information with us, no matter how small (backyard) or how large your poultry operation. Nebraska needs to be pro-active and diligent to protect our poultry producers.

The National Poultry Improvement Plan
The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), via USDA funding, is a voluntary, cooperative industry/state/federal program that provides a legal method by which poultry breeders can ship fertile eggs and chicks across state lines. Certified NPIP producers must test free of diseases, including Salmonella pullorum, Mycoplasma gallisepticum, Salmonella enterica and avian influenza.

Keeping birds healthy is important to all bird owners, whether they have a small backyard flock or a large commercial flock.
Did you know? The chicken, in 2004, was the first bird to have its genome sequenced.
Did you know? The scientific name for a chicken is *Gallus gallus domesticus*. 

Nebraska State Fair Begins
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*Do not borrow or share bird supplies.* If you must, clean and disinfect the items before using.
Salmonella Bacteria and Chicks

Many chicks carry salmonella bacteria in their intestinal tract and shed these bacteria in their feces. Although salmonella bacteria may not cause illness in chicks, it can cause serious illness in people.

**Contamination**
Salmonella bacteria spread easily from chicks to humans. Humans may become infected if they handle objects that have been in contact with chick feces and then eat without hand-washing. For example, a baby could become infected by drinking infant formula from a bottle prepared by someone who did not wash their hands after touching a chick. The salmonella bacteria must be ingested in order to spread from chicks to humans. Simply touching or holding a chick will not result in the spread of bacteria.

**Symptoms**
Most salmonella infections in humans manifest as mild, self-limiting illnesses characterized by diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps. However, the infection can spread to the bloodstream, bone marrow or nervous system—leading to severe and sometimes fatal illness. Such severe infections are more likely to occur in infants or individuals whose immune systems are compromised (for instance, bone marrow transplant recipients, persons with diabetes mellitus, persons infected with the human immunodeficiency virus and chemotherapy patients).

**Precautions**
Fortunately, routine precautions can easily prevent the spread of salmonella bacteria from chicks to humans:

- Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water after handling chicks, chick cages and equipment, or chick feces.
- Keep chicks penned in outbuildings or outside. Always wash your hands after visiting any area where chicks are kept.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling chicks, chick cages or chick equipment.
- Do not kiss chicks or share food or drink with them.
- Children less than five years of age should avoid contact with chicks.
- Older children should be supervised when handling chicks to ensure that they do not place their hands or objects exposed to chicks in their mouths. Chicks should not be kept in childcare centers.
- Immunocompromised persons should avoid contact with chicks.
- Follow instructions from your veterinarian concerning proper diet and environment for your chicks. Healthy chicks living in good environments are less likely to shed salmonella bacteria.

**Handle with care**
This information is not meant to discourage chick or poultry ownership. With a few exceptions (for example, infants or immunocompromised individuals), most people have a low risk of acquiring salmonellosis from chicks. Following simple precautions can reduce risk of infection even further.

www.nda.nebraska.gov
Wash your hands thoroughly with soap, water and disinfectant before/after handling your birds.
Report sick or dying birds to your avian veterinarian, the State Veterinarian or USDA.
DECEMBER 2019

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Check out some tips from USDA about backyard biosecurity! www.bit.ly/BrochureBackyardBio
Biosecurity & Disease Prevention

LOOK for signs.
REPORT sick birds.
PROTECT your birds.

Calendar provided courtesy of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) and the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

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Photo: Sydni Ringenberg
Photo: Evan Ruzicka
Photo: Chase Ruzicka
Photo: Clay White