

Biosecurity

Protecting Our Birds and Industry

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Did you know?

Disease can cause serious economic and social impacts on all types of birds and their owners. For example, the Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak in Virginia (2002) affected gamebirds and many other non-commercial species. The Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) outbreak in California in 2002 cost 200 million US dollars. Gamebirds, exotics and backyard birds were all involved. The AI disaster in B.C. in 2004 cost 380 million Canadian dollars and more than 18 million commercial poultry and 18 thousand gamebirds and backyard poultry had to be destroyed.

Why should you care?

You probably raise birds because you love what you do and want to produce good quality and healthy birds for yourself and your customers. In addition, you want to prevent any catastrophe where your birds die and/or your industry is shut down resulting in local, regional, and global restrictions.

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity is simply a set of organized, well-considered procedures that you as a farmer follow with the primary objectives to:

1. reduce exposure of your birds to disease causing agents.
2. prevent any disease causing agents that might be present on your farm from leaving.
3. ensure a healthy and quality end product for consumption or enjoyment.
4. make the farm secure from unwanted visitors.

Biosecurity only works if **YOU BELIEVE** that the basic principles are sound and are willing to implement them on your premises. By implementing biosecurity, you are not only protecting your birds, but you also ensure the success and sustainability of your industry.

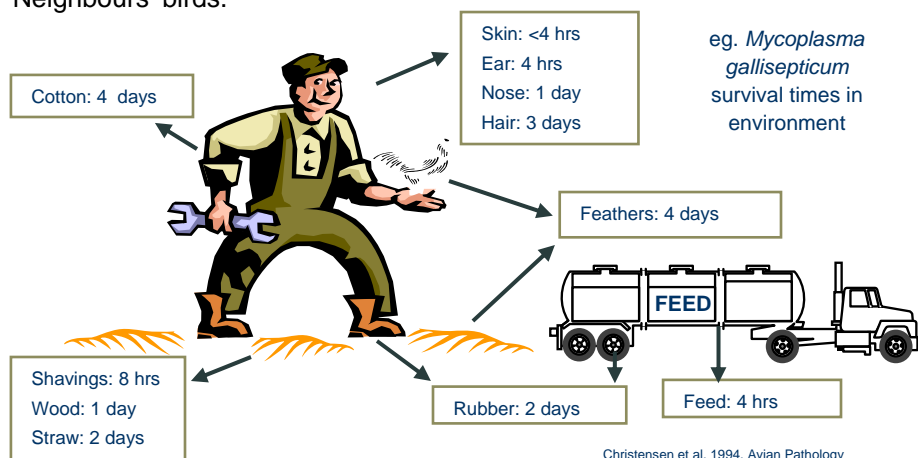
Do I need a biosecurity program when I only have a small number of birds?

There are thousands of small flock owners in Ontario. The interest in recreational activities involving birds is growing and there is an increase in the number of backyard producers and hobby farmers raising small numbers of poultry for their family's consumption/enjoyment. There is a slow, but steady growth in the game bird industry. Accompanying these trends is the tendency to increase stocking density, purchase birds from unknown sources, raise multi-species on the same farm, move birds over significant distances and use commercial sales barns to sell birds. These practices result in mixing of species from different points of origin. Disease control is seldom considered, but all of these actions have associated health risks and increase the chance of disease spread.

Disease can result in devastating losses regardless of the size of your operation. Small operations with poor disease control become a significant risk to all feather industries whether regulated by marketing boards or not. In the event of a foreign animal disease your birds are at just as much risk as a large commercial enterprise. **So, yes, you do need a biosecurity program regardless of the number of birds that you raise.**

Common sources of infectious agents:

- People are the number one source of contamination. Hands, footwear, clothing, even your hair can harbour micro-organisms.
- Bird shows, sales barns and anywhere birds from different origins are mixed together.
- Equipment including hauling crates, coops, catching equipment, feeders, drinkers, and farm tools.
- Vehicles and equipment exposed to various sources of infection both inside and outside the farm.
- Wild birds, rodents, other pests including other domestic animals.
- Neighbours' birds.



Biosecurity Principles

Principle 1

Procedures for mortality management should be present on each farm.

Principle 2

Know the health status of your flock and be prepared to react.

Principle 3

Buy clean/stay clean. Quarantine and isolation procedures should be implemented for all new arrivals and for all resident birds that have been off the property.

Principle 4

An all-in-all-out approach, segregation of age groups and appropriate "down time" between flocks should be targeted.

Principle 5

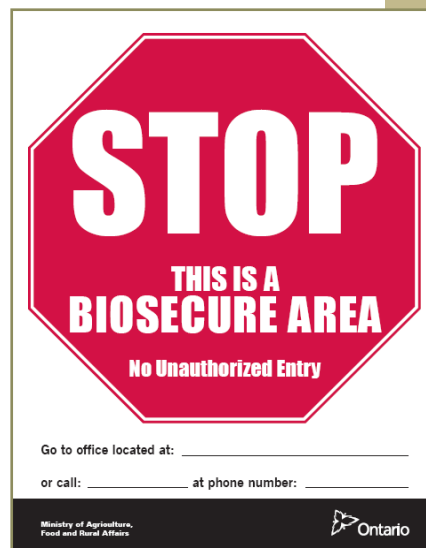
Ensure that access to the barn and premise is controlled through the establishment of protective zones and controlled access points.

Principle 6

Drinking water for birds should be free of contamination and meet water quality standards for livestock/poultry consumption.

Principle 7

Integrated pest control should be in place (insects, wild birds, rodents).





Conclusion

The factsheets provided with this package outline seven important principles of biosecurity. Remember, that disease control and prevention are complex. Prevention and intervention methods must be done in a logical sequence in order to be effective. Thus, adopting one principle or recommendation without first doing another may render the action unsuccessful. The guidelines have been prioritized based on published infectious disease literature (i.e. Principle 1 has the greatest potential for reducing risk of a serious disease epidemic compared to Principle 2 etc.). Nevertheless, all of these principles are important for a comprehensive biosecurity program.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

There is a feasible and cost-effective biosecurity program that can be designed, written, and implemented for **every type of bird operation.**

The important thing to remember is that biosecurity only works if you believe it to be valuable and ensure that everyone follows your program, **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Make biosecurity part of your everyday routine. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

Checklist to implementing an effective poultry biosecurity plan:
http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/poultry/facts/bio_plan.htm

Biosecurity recommendations for small flock poultry owners:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/poultry/facts/05-079.htm>



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