

Principle 7

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

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Pests are an important potential source of infectious agents to domestic birds. The term "pest", in this context, refers to all unwanted creatures that may damage production, reduce production efficiency or introduce infectious agents that may make your birds ill. This includes everything from insects (flies, darkling beetles etc.), wild birds (waterfowl, feral pigeons, house sparrows, owls etc.), predators (coyote, fox, weasel, raccoons etc.) to competitors that might eat feed or destroy facilities (deer, gulls etc.).

There are methods to control each of these classes of "pests". An integrated pest control program is designed to control multiple pests See the [Pest Management in Bird Production](#) factsheet (3.5).

Feed pails left uncovered attract flies and other unwanted pests.



Feeders and waterers should be refreshed daily and covered (example in photo) to discourage pests.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Wherever possible target humane methods of pest exclusion. This may include but is not limited to: covered feed bins, closed feed systems, screened openings, close cut grass or a gravel strip outside building foundation to inhibit rodents, emptying of feed lines/boots/hoppers at cleanout and CAZ kept free of debris and long vegetation where pests could live.

RECOMMENDATION #2

For range production, organic farming etc. alternate measures can be used including: sufficient roofed space to house all poultry at risk times (seasonal) and well maintained fencing against livestock, pets, predators and wild bird control.



Discussion

Pests pose a problem in all animal agricultural industries. Darkling beetles cause serious economic losses in poultry houses by maintaining disease-causing agents from one crop to another and by chewing on the barn infrastructure and insulation. Rodents can carry disease and they do an amazing job destroying insulation and chewing on wiring, sometimes causing fires.

House sparrows commonly carry *Salmonella sp.* Feral pigeons are a frequent source of Trichomoniasis. See [Trichomoniasis](#) factsheet (6.25).

Great horned owls (pictured here) frequently kill game birds and range-reared poultry. Waterfowl are a main reservoir for the Avian Influenza viruses. Raccoon feces contaminating straw and animal bedding frequently contain raccoon roundworm eggs (*Baylis ascaris*) that if ingested can result in serious neurological disease in ratites and pigeons. See [Raccoon Roundworm](#) factsheet (6.20). These are only a few of the many serious detrimental effects of unwanted pests on an agricultural operation.



Most of these impacts can be managed and significantly reduced with a well thought out and properly implemented integrated pest management plan. In many countries under the threat of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza, laws have been passed that require that all domestic birds be raised under an enclosure with a roof or netting to prevent contact with wild birds.



Cutting grass and weeds away from barns discourages rodents from inhabiting the area.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

An integrated pest management plan should be in place on every farm.

- Humane methods of pest exclusion should be attempted first by striving to make your bird housing areas "pest proof".
- Lethal methods of pest control are possible and should be used in consultation with pest control experts to ensure safety to pets, people and non-target species.



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