

General Biosecurity Guidance



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Wild Birds

One of the most important biosecurity measures is to prevent contact between wild birds and poultry or captive birds. Poultry can become infected with avian influenza (bird flu) by being in close contact with a wild bird or from contact with an infected bird's droppings or feathers. This is the reason we must not only prevent wild bird access to poultry and captive birds themselves but also to their environment.

- Outdoor areas where poultry and captive birds have access to should be fenced or surrounded by netting. This will prevent contact between wild birds and poultry and prevent outdoor areas becoming contaminated with bird droppings/feathers. If wild birds do gain access to poultry areas any droppings/feathers should be removed
- Poultry should not have access to open water, standing water or waterlogged areas as this will attract wild fowl. Keep these areas well fenced or use netting
- Avoid attracting wild birds to your holding. Locate all feeding and watering points indoors. Feeding birds outside, not clearing up spilled feed and fallen fruit will all entice wild birds as well as rodents
- Discourage wild birds from your holding with the use of deterrents such as bird scarers, flutter tape, scarecrows etc
- Sick and dead wild birds could be carriers of avian influenza. Poultry and captive birds must not be in contact with wild bird carcasses. If you find a sick or dead wild bird, remove your poultry from the area and contact your [Regional Veterinary Office](#) who will arrange to collect the bird and submit it for testing, where appropriate. Alternatively, you can contact the Avian Influenza Hotline **01 607 2512** or call the National Disease Emergency Hotline **01 492 8026** (outside office hours)
- Sick wild birds must not be handled or brought to a premises where poultry or other birds are kept
- Avoid any contact with wild birds, their carcasses, droppings or feathers where possible. Where this is not possible, ensure that you wear gloves. When removing your gloves, turn

them inside-out as you remove them and dispose of them in your household bin. Wash your hands and forearms with hot soapy water. Where water is not immediately available use hand sanitiser until hands can be washed. Clean and disinfect your footwear afterwards, shower and change your clothes.



Environment

- All poultry houses should be bird and rodent-proof, and always keep the doors closed. Wild birds, especially pigeons and waterfowl, are a particular risk for spreading bird diseases. Bird-proof netting should have apertures no larger than 25mm
- Check regularly for any holes or leaking in roofs, guttering and downpipes
- Diseases can be carried on contaminated vehicles. For this reason, staff and service vehicles etc. should be parked outside the perimeter. Only allow essential vehicles onto the site. Insist that all vehicles that do need to enter the site have been cleaned and disinfected beforehand
- Keep the environment clean and unattractive to wild birds. This includes removal of any spilled feed, fencing/netting any standing water and preventing overgrown vegetation
- Removing all visible dirt and contamination can remove up to 99% of disease causing agents
- Regular cleansing and disinfection (C&D) should be carried out on all concrete walkways, paths and similar surfaces to which poultry and wild birds could have access. C&D should also be carried out when birds are removed from their housing i.e. at the end of a production cycle. This is good practice which will reduce the level of disease causing agents in your bird/poultry housing and should help keep your birds healthier in general
- Provide footbaths containing [DAFM Approved Disinfectants](#) outside each poultry house. Ensure that the disinfectant is used at the manufacturer's recommended dilution rate and change the disinfectant at least twice weekly
- Poultry should not be exposed to manure or slurry which could contain bird flu viruses
- No other animals including pets should be permitted into poultry/captive bird housing



Personnel and Equipment

- Keep movements of visitors, vehicles and equipment onto your holding to a minimum. The less movements onto your holding, the lower the risk of introducing any disease including bird flu
- Equipment should not be shared between farms as this may lead to spread of disease e.g. trolleys, pallets. Ensure that all equipment used on the farm or for the collection of eggs has been cleaned thoroughly and disinfected with [DAFM Approved Disinfectants](#) made up according to the manufacturer's instructions before each use
- Do not re-use plastic egg trays which are not thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and do not re-use disposable egg trays as they cannot be properly disinfected
- It is not recommended that anyone with poultry or captive birds at home is in contact with poultry at another premises
- Only allow essential visitors to have access to the poultry site, and provide farm or disposable overalls and footwear for visitors and staff. Provide hand-washing facilities, and insist that these are used by staff and visitors
- Use designated clothing and footwear for attending and looking after your birds
- Where there is more than one poultry house on a holding personnel must prevent spreading any disease from one house to another. Footwear, clothing and any equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between poultry houses
- If you have staff, give them the information and training they need to maintain good standards of hygiene (an important aspect of biosecurity) at all times. If they keep their own birds at home, they will need to be extra vigilant for signs of disease and even more careful about biosecurity both at home and on your farm

Feed & Bedding

- Feed and bedding must be stored where animals in particular wild birds cannot gain access. This is to prevent animals from contaminating feed and bedding with their droppings which could be a source of disease
- Feed and water your birds indoors or under cover so that wild birds and vermin will not be attracted to the area. Remember to clean up any spillages of feed

- Provide clean drinkable water for your birds. Don't allow them to drink from places which may have become contaminated with wild bird droppings as this could lead to the spread of diseases including bird flu



Records

- Record all visitors and vehicles that enter your holding, or any premises where poultry or captive birds are kept. In the event of a confirmed case of bird flu in a holding, this would enable DAFM to trace where infection may have come from and track where it may have spread to (track and trace system). This would be a vital part of containing the outbreak. An easy way to do this is by keeping a 'Visitors book' that anyone visiting the farm must sign and date. Remember to include vehicle registration numbers as these can also carry viruses should they become contaminated with bird droppings etc
- Record any movements of birds or eggs on and off the holding. You should include the number, species, date of movement, destination of the eggs/birds and the name and address of the person to which they are going. This is to allow tracking and tracing in the event of a bird flu outbreak



Poultry

- Only buy birds from a known reputable source - isolate any newly introduced poultry for 2 weeks if possible, and attend to your own birds before the new birds
- Ducks and geese tend not to develop as severe signs of bird flu as poultry such as chickens and turkeys (although this is not always the case). Keep ducks and geese apart from other poultry as they could be carriers of disease without showing signs
- Poultry or other captive birds should not be able to mix with birds from another holding
- Check your birds regularly for signs of illness. You can find information on signs of bird flu at www.gov.ie/birdflu . If you have any suspicion that your birds may be affected by bird flu, you are legally obliged to notify DAFM. You may do this by alerting your [Regional Veterinary Office](#).