

Notifiable Avian Diseases

Biosecurity information for all bird keepers



This document provides guidance for people who care for **any type of captive bird**, in reducing the risk of introducing or spreading avian disease.

Key Biosecurity Practices

- Buy healthy stock from reliable sources
- Provide clean food and water that is protected from wild birds
- Minimise flock contact with wild birds and in particular, waterfowl
- Maintain good standards of hygiene and use disinfection facilities
- Separate and isolate new or ill stock
- Follow codes* for appropriate slurry management and disposal of litter and other waste
- Record details of stock (eg health and identification), visitors and deliveries
- Develop a contingency plan
- Educate staff on the clinical signs of disease and actions taken on suspicion
- Minimise the risk of people or equipment transferring disease to or from your flock

* Please refer to Page 3 for links to the codes, useful contacts and further information

Register your flock!

It is a **legal requirement** to register your flock if you have 50 or more birds (of any variety). Voluntary registration of smaller flocks is also encouraged.

www.gov.uk/poultry-registration

Notifiable avian diseases

Newcastle disease is a highly contagious disease of wild and captive birds. It can cause a short-term eye infection in humans.

In birds, the main clinical signs are:

- respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing or gurgling
- muscular tremors
- yellowish-green watery faeces (diarrhoea)
- depression and loss of appetite.

You can **vaccinate your birds** against Newcastle disease; ask your vet for advice.

Avian influenza (bird flu) is a highly contagious disease of birds that can also affect humans and other mammals.

Typically, low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) is less severe and may cause mild breathing problems in birds, but those affected may not present clear signs of infection.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) can develop suddenly and with high mortality. Other clinical signs include:

- swollen head
- blue discoloration of neck and throat
- loss of appetite and increased mortality
- respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing or gurgling
- diarrhoea
- drop in egg production.

However, some bird species (such as ducks, geese and pigeons) display few or no clinical signs.

More information on notifiable avian diseases is available at www.gov.scot



Plan ahead



Assess the risks

The Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Animal Health and Biosecurity (see page 3) can help you identify and reduce risk of your birds becoming infected with a notifiable avian disease.

Consult your vet and prepare a contingency plan to better prepare you for any increase in the risk of disease.

Check that you have provided sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect staff, should AI be confirmed at your premises.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/aisuspected.pdf>

Things to think about

To halt the spread of disease, the Scottish Government may implement restrictions on the movement of birds and bird products.

The GB Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy (see page 3) provides details on the types of restrictions and zones that may be put in place.

Movement restrictions of livestock or produce may be imposed in your area.

- ▶ What would the consequences be for your business?
- ▶ Do you have contingencies and plans to cope with restrictions?

Housing of birds or isolation from wild birds may be required or recommended.

- ▶ Do you have the facilities to accommodate this?
- ▶ If not, what are your options or next steps?

Respond

If notifiable avian disease is confirmed in the UK, you should consider taking additional steps to protect your flock.

Below are some suggestions:

- **Update your contact list** – key people should be easily contactable.
- **Heighten vigilance** – increase the frequency of flock inspections.
- **Increase level of biosecurity** – consider restricting access, and increase facilities for cleansing and disinfection.
- **Listen for news** – updates will be available on the Scottish Government website and shared via radio, news channels and social media.
- **Register for APHA Alerts service** – receive updates directly to your mobile phone or landline.
- **Check your preparedness** – are you ready to engage your contingency plans, should you be affected by movement restrictions?



If you believe that your flock may have any form of notifiable disease you must contact your local APHA Office immediately. Failure to do so can be deemed an offence.

Useful contacts and further information

Scottish Government Avian Influenza page
www.gov.scot/avianinfluenza

The GB Poultry Register
www.gov.uk/poultry-registration

The GB Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468294/avian-disease-control-strategy-2015.pdf

Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Animal Health and Biosecurity
www.gov.scot/publications/2002/11/15800/13894

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens
www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/04/3465

Code of Practice for the Prevention of Environmental Pollution from Agricultural Activity
www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/03/20613/51366

Find your local APHA office
www.gov.uk/apha

Subscribe to the APHA Alerts Service
<http://animalhealth.system-message.co.uk>

Wild bird mortality incidents (Five or more dead birds found in one location) should be reported by telephoning **03459 335577**

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