



Reducing The Risk Of Avian Influenza

FACT SHEET

Avian influenza (AI) is a highly infectious disease affecting many species of birds. Disease outbreaks occur most frequently in chickens and turkeys.

What are the signs of avian influenza?

In addition to sudden deaths, the signs of avian influenza include:

- breathing difficulties
- watery eyes
- bluish colouring in the comb, wattle or legs
- swelling of the head
- diarrhoea
- nervous signs
- drop in water and feed intake
- drop in egg production.

Many species of wild birds, including waterfowl, can carry avian influenza viruses but generally show no signs of the disease. Visit www.nre.tas.gov.au/ai for further information about avian influenza.

How is avian influenza spread?

Avian influenza viruses are spread via faeces, blood, saliva and other discharges from infected birds. Susceptible birds may become infected directly when they have contact with droppings or secretions from infected birds, or indirectly through contaminated drinking water, feed, equipment, footwear or clothing.

What if my birds get sick or die?

All bird owners should always seek professional veterinary advice if any of their birds become sick or die suddenly. Report unusual findings such as sudden or large numbers of deaths immediately to your local vet or phone the all-hours Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

What can I do to reduce the risk of avian influenza?

The most important thing all bird owners can do to reduce the risk of avian influenza, as well as other diseases, is to ensure bird-keeping facilities have good biosecurity. Use the biosecurity checklist below to identify priorities for your situation or property.

**IF YOU OBSERVE UNUSUAL DISEASE SYMPTOMS OR UNEXPECTED DEATHS CALL
YOUR VET OR THE ALL-HOURS EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE HOTLINE
1800 675 888**

BIOSECURITY CHECK LIST FOR ALL BIRD KEEPERS

The main risk comes from wild birds	
Keep wild birds away from your birds	Ensure that sheds/aviaries effectively exclude wild birds. Remove objects that attract wild birds such as feed, water, ponds and roosting places.
Ensure clean water supply	Untreated water or any water storage that wild birds have access to is a major risk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use chlorinated town (mains) or good quality deep bore water. • If rain/dam/creek water must be used it should be filtered to remove sediments then treated eg. by adding chlorine to achieve a consistent level of 1-2 ppm at the drinker.
Keep feed secure	Store feed and feed it out in a manner that avoids contamination from wild birds, rodents and other animals.
In the case of free range birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent access to possible sources of standing water used by wild birds, eg. ponds, dams and creeks. • Provide feed and water under shelters or in special feeders that deter mixing with wild birds.
Good on farm biosecurity will keep out many diseases	
Don't bring infection onto your property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear clean overalls and footwear when entering anybody's bird areas. Always change into clean clothes after visiting someone else's birds or property and before entering your own bird area. • Purchase animals of a known health status from a reputable breeder or producer. Avoid buying from markets or shows. • Quarantine newly received birds for 6 weeks if possible. • Restrict visitor access to bird areas. Keep a record of who goes where or handled what. • Do not share equipment with other bird keepers unless it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. • Use an all-in-all-out process if possible ie. replace all birds at the same time.
Be vigilant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect birds daily. • Report unusual deaths or sickness promptly to your vet or DPI/PWE.
Proper disposal of birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispose of dead birds promptly by bagging securely and using either weekly rubbish pick-up or by burying; prevent predation. • Do not allow pets (dogs, cats etc) to have access to dead birds (wild or domestic).
Maintain facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean bird areas at least once a week. • Remove sand and grit from aviaries between batches and every few months for resident birds. • Thoroughly clean concrete floors, walls and wire of aviaries and chicken coops by scrubbing down with detergent, drying and disinfecting – in that order. • Clean and disinfect feed containers regularly.
Good hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely wash hands with soap and water after handling birds or maintaining facilities. • Wear gardening gloves or disposable gloves when handling sick or dead birds or maintaining facilities.
Biosecurity planning	Contact your local vet or DPI/PWE for further information on biosecurity.

