

Biosecurity

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity is a set of habits that prevent disease spread. Biosecurity works by preventing both the introduction of new diseases to your farm and the exit of those diseases from your flock to neighboring birds. By practicing good biosecurity habits, you can better protect yourself and your community from preventable and devastating diseases.

Why is Biosecurity necessary?

Diseases can be spread to your flock in a variety of ways. Some diseases are spread by direct contact, such as when wild birds or new poultry meet resident birds that are of a different health status. Others can be introduced indirectly such as stepping in fecal matter of wild birds and tracking disease back home on dirty shoes. Because disease can enter your flock in so many ways, it is important to take steps to limit entry where possible.

What steps can I take to protect my flock?

Sanitize Coops and Equipment

New coops or other equipment such as feeders or drinkers have the potential to bring disease onto your property. Since most equipment comes from locations that have contact with live poultry such as spring chick sales, diseases can come in contact with equipment and get a free ride to your property. It is important to sanitize all incoming equipment before allowing contact with your flock. Please refer to the sanitation information sheet to choose appropriate products on a case-by-case basis.

Purchase new birds only from disease free sources

Poultry can harbor a variety of diseases without showing any symptoms, and many poultry sellers have no idea that their birds are carrying disease. New birds can bring underlying disease with them and show sickness later on, or they can transmit disease to resident poultry who then become sick. To prevent underlying disease from entering your flock, only purchase new poultry from sources that can certify the absence of disease through regular testing. Sellers that are NPIP certified test for Avian Influenza and Salmonella Pullorum and Typhoid; however, NPIP certification DOES NOT guarantee testing for Mycoplasma. It is wise to quarantine any new birds separate from the rest of your flock for at least 30 days. During this time, you can submit samples for disease screening of your own and monitor for any issues before integrating with the others.

Clean Source of Birds: Deer Run Farm 5131 Sixes Road Emmitsburg, MD 21727 www.deerrunfarmmd.com Breeds: Welsummer, Maran, Delaware, and Ameraucana	Tested Every 90 days and negative for: Avian Influenza (AI), Newcastle Disease Virus, Infectious Bronchitis Virus, Infectious Laryngotracheitis, <i>Mycoplasma gallisepticum</i> (MG), & <i>Mycoplasma synoviae</i> (MS) NPIP for: AI, Salmonella pullorum and typhoid (PT), MG, MS
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Restrict wild birds and rodents

Diseases can also be transmitted to your flock by wild birds and rodents. When building your flock's coop and run, affix poultry netting in a secure manner so that rodents cannot burrow underneath, and wild birds cannot enter the rafters. Additionally, discourage vermin by storing feed in raised, sealed containers and not feeding wild birds near your flock.

Use only clean, dedicated shoes and clothing

By following the recommendations listed above, disease entry from other animals can be decreased. However, you or any other person visiting your flock can indirectly track disease onto your property. Because flock caretakers are the most frequent factors that exit and re-enter a farm, they are also often the biggest risk for new disease introduction. Follow these steps to decrease accidental disease introduction:

- Have a set of clothes or coveralls that are only worn when working with your flock and that do not leave your property. Disposable coveralls are also a good option (available at paint and hardware stores.)
- Have a pair of boots or shoes that you only use in the area with your birds. Disposable shoe covers (also available at paint stores or Walmart) can be used if you have friends visiting your birds.
- Use a footbath, which is a shallow pan or bucket, with disinfectant and a scrub brush that you can use to clean your shoes before AND after working with your birds. Be sure to clean out and replace the footbaths often as they will not work if they sit out too long or fill up with dirt. If using bleach, replace daily and keep footbath covered when not in use.
- If you have visited other birds such as at a show or auction (even if you did not touch them), make sure to shower and change clothes before working with your own birds.
- Remember that if you have new birds being kept in quarantine, these should be treated as if an outside flock. Use different clothes, shoes, and tools with the new birds and always visit and feed the new birds last. NEVER work with the new birds and then visit the rest of the flock afterwards without taking a shower and changing clothes.
- Make sure that anyone in contact with your birds follows the same rules. It is a good idea to post signs outside where you keep your birds to keep people from entering the area ("do not enter" or "no trespassing" signs are available at farm supply stores).

Although biosecurity may seem like a lot of work, disease prevention is key to the long-term health of your flock. Many diseases, such as Mycoplasma and Laryngotracheitis, are lifelong. Others, such as Avian influenza and virulent Newcastle Disease result in state-mandated euthanasia of infected flocks. Because in many cases treatment is impossible, prevention is the best medicine.