

April 12, 2015

## Biosecurity Advisory: Risk from Migratory Birds

The highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) strain that has recently infected poultry operations in Ontario and eight US states is believed to originate from wild birds, which can carry the virus without exhibiting clinical signs. Southern Ontario is part of the Mississippi migratory bird flyway and it is not unusual to see flocks of birds resting in fields, ponds or wetlands at this time of year, en route to their Arctic breeding grounds.

Because of the increased risk of AI transmission this year, it is extremely important for poultry producers to minimize the risk of introducing fecal material from wild birds into poultry operations. The AI virus can survive for extended periods of time in the environment, particularly in cool weather. **With planting season fast approaching, it is important to realize that tilling and planting equipment will cover every inch of fields that may have been contaminated by wild birds. This equipment should be kept away from poultry barns and from driveways serving poultry premises.** After using this equipment, producers should shower and change clothing before entering a poultry barn. It would also be advisable to, if possible, close curtains on the side of the barn that faces a field where tilling is occurring, particularly in dry and/or windy conditions, to reduce the risk of viral particles blowing into the barn.

Particular attention needs to be paid to barn entrances. The majority of the poultry industry is adopting the use of an “anteroom”. An anteroom is the primary entrance room and is attached to the production area of a barn. The room is separated into a “dirty” and “clean” side, which are divided by a solid barrier. A place to store clothing and footwear is located on both sides and there are facilities and/or supplies for people to clean their hands. The anteroom entry should be the only entrance to the production area that people use.

The outside is considered to be the dirty side. Outer clothing and footwear are removed and stored on the dirty side. Hands are cleaned, using soap and water if available, or using hand sanitizer. The person steps over the barrier in their sock feet (without touching the “dirty” floor) onto the clean side and puts on coveralls and boots dedicated for use within the barn (“clean” side). They can then enter the production area. The process is reversed when leaving the production area.

An anteroom entry is simple to construct. If you already have an entrance room, all that may be required is a sheet of plywood, a bench, a few 2”x4” boards, a bottle of hand sanitizer, coat hooks, a couple of extra pairs of barn boots and coveralls, and an anteroom. If you have to build an entrance room, the costs will be higher but, it is still a good investment compared to the cost of disease.



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More information on creating an anteroom is available at:

<http://www.agbiosecurity.ca/uploadedfiles/TheDevelopmentandConstructionofAnteroomsonCanadianPoultryFarmsFinal.pdf>

As always, poultry farmers should contact their veterinarian, their Board and call the 24-hour emergency hotline **1-877-SOS-BYRD** immediately if their birds show any signs of illness.

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