

February 1, 2021

Field Biosecurity Guidelines for State/County/City Personnel Entering Shell Egg Packing Facilities, Poultry Harvest Facilities, and Poultry Farms

To: All California State/County/City Personnel

The winter migratory bird season is underway and with it comes the possible return of Avian Influenza (AI). Conditions are similar to those in Winter of 2015 when two strains (H5N8 and H5N2) of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) were detected along the Pacific Coast, in wild birds, backyard flocks, and in two separate commercial poultry flocks in California. The 2015 HPAI outbreak in the Midwest resulted in the death of nearly 50 million commercial egg layers and turkeys.

Two key factors make Winter 2021 similar to that of 2015:

- 1) A high number of HPAI outbreaks (H5N8 and other strains) in poultry and wild birds in several Asian countries. This is key as three of the major flyways (East Asia/Australasia, Pacific Americas, Central Americas) mix in Alaska where birds can swap AI viruses. Birds in the Pacific Americas Flyway then migrate through California.
- 2) California is experiencing a late wet season with less standing surface water, forcing birds to closely congregate at stopovers and making it easier for diseases to spread between birds.

Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) is endemic in wild waterfowl and the same factors that increase the risk for HPAI transmission are the same for LPAI transmission. This is a continual hazard every winter. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) asks for your assistance and cooperation in preventing the introduction and spread of this devastating poultry disease by following some simple biosecurity precautions. With your help we can continue to provide a safe and healthy food supply for Californians. State, County, City, and private inspectors and auditors should adhere to the following:

- 1) When possible, conduct remote or virtual audits.
- 2) If in-person inspections or visits to poultry farms must occur:
 - a. Do not enter farms where eggs are hatched or poultry are raised if you have birds or live poultry at home.
 - b. Never visit any poultry farm within 72 hours of visiting another commercial poultry farm, egg or meat processor; after duck hunting or having had other exposure to wild migratory waterfowl; or visiting any backyard, school, feed



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- store, swap meet, live bird market, pet store, fair, veterinary clinic, zoo, bird hunt club, or other facility which has live poultry or birds.
- c. Always wash your vehicle including undercarriage and wheel wells before entering a farm/egg processing facility. A commercial car wash can be used for this purpose.
 - i. Park your vehicle in a designated area per the company's biosecurity plan or if there is none, try to park on cement or a paved area away from the production houses.
 - ii. Keep the inside of the vehicle clean and free of any organic material.
 - d. Use good personal hygiene measures including freshly laundered clothes and showering before visiting a poultry farm or processing facility. Clothing that has been worn to premises with birds or live poultry should *never* be worn to another farm or processing facility without being laundered between visits.
 - e. Never enter a poultry farm unless trained to apply and remove (don and doff) biosecurity clothing without spreading disease. If entering live bird areas, use clean, dedicated rubber boots or disposable plastic shoe covers, disposable coveralls, a mask, disposable gloves and a hair net.
 - f. **ALWAYS follow all the biosecurity instructions of the commercial poultry farm/egg processing facility which may include: registering in a logbook, answering queries about bird and poultry premises visited previously, using company supplied protective clothing and footwear, footbaths, hand cleaning stations, tire/truck wash stations and other biosecurity measures.**

CDFA appreciates your efforts to protect poultry health in California on a daily basis. Remember, people, equipment, and vehicles can easily spread dangerous diseases from one location to another.

For more information about biosecurity, please visit: cdfa.ca.gov/go/poultrybiosecurity

Sincerely,

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Director and State Veterinarian