



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

July 2, 2019

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

Enhanced biosecurity is critical in the face of the ongoing low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) and virulent Newcastle disease (vND) incidents.

In April 2019, there was a confirmed case of H5N2 LPAI in Monterey County. Then another, unrelated case of H7 LPAI (full virus isolation pending) was confirmed last week in Merced County. While LPAI is not as fast-spreading and in some cases asymptomatic, it has the potential to mutate to highly pathogenic avian influenza which is highly lethal to poultry. The strains detected are consistent with North American lineage LPAI typically found in migrating birds. While these specific strains have never been associated with a human health threat, they trigger a regulatory control response in an effort to quickly eliminate them from domestic flocks where mutations are more likely to occur.

In addition, vND eradication efforts are on-going in Southern California. Virulent Newcastle disease, previously known as exotic Newcastle disease, is a fast-spreading virus that affects the respiratory, nervous and digestive system of numerous bird species, but most severely in poultry. The last outbreak in the U.S. occurred in Southern California in 2002, resulting in the death of 3.2 million birds and a response cost of over \$160 million.

Since May 2018, 448 vND infected premises have been identified in California. Thanks to cooperation from Southern California residents in very difficult circumstances, and a tremendous commitment from emergency response teams, the joint CDFFA/USDA Virulent Newcastle Disease Project staff has found no new positive detections of the disease since June 4, 2019. Teams are currently testing poultry in areas previously known to have infected birds in order to find any remaining pockets of disease. Now is a crucial time for adherence to biosecurity as we move closer to eradication.

Until these diseases are eradicated, all areas in California are at risk.

We request your assistance and cooperation in preventing the spread of these devastating poultry diseases by following some important biosecurity precautions. These precautions will reduce the risk of introducing and spreading vND and LPAI.



State, county, city, and private inspectors, auditors and service providers should adhere to the following:

- 1) If possible, *suspend* all on-farm poultry area visits, if doing so does not present an eminent public health threat. If possible, replace on-site inspections with remote, record-based audits. Commercial poultry producers have been asked to minimize personnel entering live production areas. **This request will be re-evaluated on October 1, 2019.**

If in-person inspections or visits to poultry farms must occur:

- 1) Do not enter farms where eggs are hatched or poultry are raised if you have birds or live poultry at home.
- 2) Never visit any poultry farm within 72 hours after 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 store, swap meet, live bird market, pet store, fair, veterinary clinic, zoo, bird hunt club, or other facility which has live poultry or birds.
- 3) Always wash your vehicle before entering a farm/egg processing facility. A commercial car wash can be used for this purpose. 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. Keep the inside of the vehicle clean and free of any organic material.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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, and a hair net. Use disposable gloves and a mask as directed by the company being inspected.
- 6) ALWAYS follow all the biosecurity instructions of the commercial poultry farm/egg processing facility including, but not limited to: registering in a logbook, answering queries about bird and poultry premises visited previously, disinfecting

shoes or changing into dedicated footwear, and cleaning and disinfecting of vehicle wheel wells if they must enter a premises.

TO REPEAT THE MOST IMPORTANT POLICY: Always comply with the personnel entry and disinfection procedures required by poultry company policies. These procedures may include signing in and out, use of tire/truck wash stations, company supplied protective clothing and footwear, footbaths, hand cleaning stations, and other biosecurity measures.

Remember, people, equipment, and vehicles can easily spread dangerous diseases from one location to another. Personnel who spread the disease can be held liable. CDFA appreciates your efforts to protect poultry health in California on a daily basis. Please do your part to protect the poultry industry, California's agricultural businesses, and our Nation's food supply.

For more information and updates on vND or avian influenza, please visit: the CDFA Avian Health Page
[\(\[https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Avian_Health_Program.html\]\(https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Avian_Health_Program.html\)\)](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Avian_Health_Program.html)

Sincerely,

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