

Biosecurity for Poultry

At Shows, Swaps and Auctions

Introduction

Events where poultry are shown, displayed, swapped, or sold are defined as commingling events. It is recommended that these events not be held, especially during times of high migratory bird activity and related risk of current circulating strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza. If you plan to take your birds to a commingling event (“an event”) there are specific biosecurity precautions that should be considered in addition to your routine biosecurity. For routine biosecurity, see [Resources for poultry owners](#).

Before an event:

Do not introduce new birds into your flock in the 30 days leading up to the event.

Examine your entire flock to ensure they are in good health, and then closely examine the birds you intend to take to the event to ensure they show no signs of disease or parasitism. See [how to prevent and detect disease in small flocks](#) for information. If you suspect illness, do not attend the event, and consider contacting a private veterinarian for assistance. To find a veterinary clinic:

- Visit [Search for Veterinary Care](#) on the ABVMA website
- Visit [Veterinarian Clinics](#) on the AFAC website.



Familiarize yourself with the biosecurity requirements of the event. Should event organizers decide to proceed with their events, they should have:

1. A host that will:
 - a. Check that all participants have a [PID \(see premises identification program\)](#)
 - b. Confirm vaccination histories (e.g., [Infectious Laryngotracheitis Virus](#))
 - c. Confirm the health status of the birds before and during the event.
2. Measures in place to prevent exposure to wild birds.
3. Measures in place to prevent exposure to wild birds' feces (no feces on the ground and no feces in the water source).
4. Boot washes/dips/disposable booties and hand sanitizer/washing stations to be used when entering and exiting the event facility.
5. Enough space so you can separate your birds from other birds by 2 meters (six-and-a-half feet).
6. Systems in place to ensure that your birds are not handled by anyone other than you OR if the birds need to be handled (e.g., judges), then the handlers have hygiene protocols in place to prevent spread of disease (e.g., hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, change of smock between birds).

If the event does not have these types of biosecurity measures in place, birds that attend the event are at increased risk for infection. Furthermore, if birds from this event are taken home, then the birds at home are also put at risk.

Ensure that all cages and equipment you plan to take to the event are washed and disinfected (see [cleaning and disinfecting backyard poultry flock premises](#) for information). To minimize the need for cleaning and disinfecting, use disposable items as much as possible (e.g., disposable cups for feed and water).

Launder your clothing and wash-and-disinfect your footwear before you go to the event.

Check your provincial ([Government of Alberta: Provincially regulated animal diseases](#)) and federal ([CFIA: Terrestrial animal diseases](#)) animal health websites for updates on avian diseases. The following page will have the most up-to-date information and links available on avian influenza: [CFIA: Protect your flock from bird flu](#).

At an event:

Ensure that your birds are at least 2 meters (six-and-a-half feet) away from other birds at the event.

Different poultry species should be in different cages and should not be placed together.

Ensure your birds have ample space in their cages; crowding is stressful and may predispose your birds to illness.

Bring your own water and feed. Do not share equipment or supplies with other exhibitors.



Only persons who live or work on the place of origin of the birds should handle and provide care to the birds. Purchasers may handle the birds once they are purchased, but only to remove them from the event.

Hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, or sanitizing wipes should be readily available.

After an event:

When you return home, freshly launder your clothing, and wash-and-disinfect your footwear before any contact with your flock. Ideally, you should have specific (dedicated) clothing and footwear that you wear **only** when you are working with your flock at home.

Birds brought home from an event should be placed in a separate facility for a quarantine period of 30 days. This separate quarantine facility should be about 10 meters (30 feet) away from other bird housing. When doing chores, tend to the birds that stayed home first, then to the quarantined birds with a change of clothing and footwear and hand washing/sanitizing in between.



To reduce the risk of spreading disease, refrain from attending another event with your birds for 30 days after returning home from an event.

Report any illnesses to your veterinarian as well as to the managers of the event.

References:

1. British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Animal Health Act – General Order AIV 2023-02
2. California Department of Food and Agriculture. Biosecurity Practices to Minimize Risk of Spreading Avian Diseases – Poultry Exhibitors
3. Government of Ontario. Biosecurity for poultry shows ISSN 1198-712X, Published March 2017
4. Indiana State Board of Animal Health. Small Flock & Exhibition Poultry. Recommended Practices to Protect Avian Health at Indiana Poultry Shows and Exhibitions