

BACKYARD FLOCK TIP . . .

BACKYARD BIOSECURITY

The threat of Avian Influenza virus as well as a number of other potentially catastrophic poultry diseases makes biosecurity a must for all poultry producers. The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has recently published information relating to six ways to prevent poultry diseases. These six steps are summarized below:

1. **Keep Your Distance.** Restrict access to your property and your birds. Consider fencing off the area where you keep your birds. Allow only people who take care of your birds to come in contact with them. Visitors that have birds of their own should not be allowed near your birds. Game birds and migratory fowl should not have contact with your flock because they can carry disease causing organisms.
2. **Keep It Clean.** Wear clean clothes, scrub your shoes with disinfectant, and wash your hands thoroughly before entering your bird area. Clean cages and change food and water daily. Clean and disinfect equipment that comes in contact with your birds or their droppings, including cages and tools. Remove manure before disinfecting and properly dispose of dead birds.
3. **Don't Haul Diseases Home.** If you have been near other birds or bird owners, clean and disinfect car and truck tires, poultry cages, and equipment before going home. If your birds have been to a fair or exhibition, keep them separated from your flock for at least two weeks after the event. This provides a reasonable quarantine time to determine if the birds have been infected with a serious poultry disease. New birds should be kept separate from your flock for at least 30 days.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

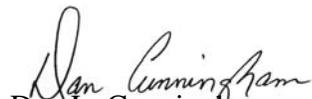
4. **Don't Borrow Diseases From Your Neighbor.** Do not share lawn or garden equipment, tools, or poultry supplies with your neighbors or other bird owners. If you do bring these items home, clean and disinfect them before they reach your property.

5. **Know the Warning Signs of Infectious Bird Diseases.**
 - Sudden increase in bird deaths
 - Sneezing, coughing, and nasal discharge
 - Watery and green diarrhea
 - Lack of energy and poor appetite
 - A drop in egg production
 - An increase in soft or thin shelled eggs
 - Swelling around the eyes, neck, and head
 - Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
 - Tremors, drooping wings, twisting of the head and neck.

6. **Report Sick Birds.** Early detection is important to prevent the spread of disease. Don't wait. If your birds are sick or dying, call your local county extension office, or the Georgia Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory Network located in Oakwood, Georgia. The Poultry Diagnostic laboratory Network has poultry laboratories staffed with poultry veterinarians across the state. These veterinarians will advise and assist poultry owners with questions are problems related to poultry disease.

Georgia is a major poultry producing state with poultry production accounting for more than \$14 billion annually to the state's economy. The introduction of a catastrophic poultry disease such as Avian Influenza into our birds could have a devastating impact. Thus all poultry owners should be aware of the risk and the need for protecting our flocks from disease.

Resource: United States Department of Agriculture, Program Aid No. 1764. Issued May 2004.


Dan L. Cunningham

Extension Poultry Coordinator

County Extension Agent/Coordinator

“Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on this subject.”