

As bird owners, a top priority to keeping a happy flock is a healthy flock. Biosecurity is key to keeping disease out. Good biosecurity steps practiced daily are always important but even more so when the threat of highly transmissible poultry disease is high. During waterfowl migration season in late fall through spring, wild birds commingle together in large groups where viruses, including Avian Influenza (AI), circulate and spread. AI virus strains occur naturally in wild waterfowl without causing illness.

There are many good resources available on helpful biosecurity tips to implement in your coop, one of those being USDA's **Defend the Flock Program**

Biosecurity Basics:

- **Keep visitors to a minimum.** Visitors, especially those frequently around other poultry, increase risk of bringing harmful disease into your flock. Make sure those who do come in contact with your flock follow proper biosecurity principles.
- **Provide disposable boot covers and/or footbaths** for anyone coming into contact with your flock. When using a footbath, boots must be free of debris prior to stepping in the footbath. Disinfectants do not work on debris.
- **Have clean and/or designated poultry clothing.** Make sure clothes are clean prior to interacting your flock and do not have other poultry dust or dropping on clothes or footwear.
- **Clean and disinfect any shared equipment, cages, or other tools before entering your farm.**
- **Wild songbirds and waterfowl can transmit disease to your flock.** Prevent interaction with wild birds when possible by securing barns and other facilities, remove standing water and protecting food sources.
- **Most importantly: Know the signs of illness and report sick birds.** It is important to have a good relationship with your veterinarian prior to a disease issue. Visit OSU extension website **HERE** for a list of veterinarians providing poultry services.

If you suspect disease in your flock and have increased, unexplained mortality, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at (614) 728-6220 or After Hours at (888) 456-3405.



For more information on Avian Influenza and how it could affect your flock, check out this **informational flier** from Ohio State University extension OSU Avian Influenza Information.



Email jgregorich@ohiopoultry.org with additional questions or for more information on Ohio's NPIP and Avian Influenza monitoring program.