



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**

**BIOSECURITY** GUIDELINES FOR  
**EXHIBITION**  
**POULTRY**

**NATIONAL BIOSECURITY MANUAL**

BIOSECURITY

EXHIBITION  
POULTRY

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY



BIOSECURITY



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# INTRODUCTION

Exhibiting or showing poultry is a popular recreational activity in Australia enjoyed by people of all ages. Bird shows are a great opportunity for stud breeders and exhibitors to preserve the gene pool of pure breeds, compete for coveted titles and demonstrate the best that different breeds have to offer. However, any gathering of birds carries the risk of spreading disease, particularly where there is close contact between birds from different flocks. Given the highly mobile nature of our community, with many exhibitors travelling long distances to different poultry shows across the country, our activities carry a real potential for quickly and easily spreading any diseases that might be present.

There are a few simple things that stud breeders and exhibitors attending bird shows can do to protect their birds and help prevent the spread of diseases. The guidance provided in this manual is intended to encourage exhibitors to take up good biosecurity practices that will help them protect their birds against disease and help keep bird shows a safe and disease-free environment for all.

Most bird owners already practice good biosecurity without realising it, as these simple practices are common-sense and easily integrated into routine activities. It is important that owners encourage one another to be biosecurity-conscious, and it is essential that shows make biosecurity a high priority to ensure the health and safety of all participants, and protect the future of poultry exhibition as an enjoyable nationwide pastime.

## About this manual

This biosecurity manual, developed by the Exhibition Stud Poultry Australia (ESPA) in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, provides a set of biosecurity guidelines tailored specifically for exhibition poultry enthusiasts. It takes into account the unique nature and needs of poultry exhibition and suggests practices, which if followed consistently by all, reduce the risk of introducing and spreading disease. Following these guidelines will assist stud breeders and exhibitors to keep their birds healthy and free from disease, as well as contribute to the overall safety and biosecurity of all bird gatherings and demonstrate our sector's commitment to responsible practices.

The implementation of these guidelines by poultry exhibitors is voluntary. ESPA does, however, strongly encourage all stud breeders and exhibitors to employ the practices outlined in this manual to protect their birds and those of our fellow exhibitors.

Individuals are encouraged apply good biosecurity to all aspects of their enterprise.

## What is biosecurity?

'Biosecurity' describes the systems put in place to protect people, animals and ecological systems against disease and other biological threats. Biosecurity is achieved through the practices that aim to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of diseases.

## How can I protect my birds?

Having good biosecurity measures in place is the key to keeping your birds free from disease. Implementing biosecurity measures doesn't have to be difficult or expensive, most often they are simple practices or habits that if done consistently will reduce the likelihood of birds becoming infected and / or spreading disease. Biosecurity principles can be adapted to your unique circumstances. Details on how to protect your birds are provided in Section 1 of this manual.

The responsibility for implementing good biosecurity rests with the individual breeder or exhibitor.

## Emergency disease outbreaks

In the event of an emergency disease outbreak it is important that we are able to identify whether our people and / or birds have been in contact with infected birds. This is especially important for diseases that can be passed from birds to humans, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza. These guidelines provide advice on record-keeping for individuals, so that we have the information we need to stop disease spreading throughout our community.

It will also be beneficial for our community to demonstrate that we are committed to biosecurity and have prepared and implemented written biosecurity plans for our flocks. Hygiene at shows and traceability of birds and owners attending exhibitions are two other areas you may wish to consider when developing your biosecurity awareness program.

The biosecurity manual, developed by Exhibition Stud Poultry Australia in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is an opportunity to have a biosecurity policy that is exhibition poultry specific. It completes the biosecurity map for Poultry Production, as all other poultry industry sectors have a biosecurity manual in place.

## National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production

The National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production (the national commercial poultry manual) is a set of minimum biosecurity standards for commercial poultry sectors in Australia, produced through a collaborative effort between commercial poultry industries and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. While the manual was produced with commercial producers in mind, the principles of good biosecurity apply to any poultry or bird-raising operation.

The Biosecurity Manual for Exhibition Poultry refers to and complements the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production, using the same biosecurity principles but providing the guidance specific to the needs of the exhibition poultry sector.

More detailed biosecurity information can be obtained by referring to the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production which can be downloaded from the DAFF website at: [www.daff.gov.au/birds](http://www.daff.gov.au/birds).

## Definitions

**Biosecurity:** describes the systems put in place to protect people, animals and ecological systems against disease and other biological threats. Biosecurity is achieved through the practices that aim to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of diseases.

**Poultry:** in keeping with the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production, the term poultry as used throughout this manual is defined as: 'Chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges, ostriches and emus reared or kept in captivity'.

**Good Practice:** covers all aspects of husbandry involved in breeding and exhibiting poultry.

**Tracing:** the process of locating animals and people that may have been exposed to an infectious disease, with the purpose of advising them of their exposure and determining if their animals have been infected.

## A guide to using this manual

Section 1 of this manual provides guidance for individual bird owners.

Section 2 provides a set of biosecurity guidelines for clubs that promote and organise poultry shows.

Section 3 describes the leadership roles that ESPA, state associations, and clubs can assume to promote good practice. Stud masters and exhibitors should be aware of these guidelines and cooperate with show organisers to ensure that sound biosecurity practices are followed at shows.

Log books for use by individuals and clubs have been developed as separate documents to accompany this manual. Recommended fields or subheading for log books are provided in the appendix here. However, these are only provided as a guide, and you may prefer to design your own record keeping templates.



# SECTION 1

## GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS

### How can I protect my birds from disease?

Having good biosecurity measures in place is the key to avoiding pest and disease incursions on your property.

The following eight simple steps will help prevent disease outbreaks in your poultry.

#### 1. Keep your equipment and poultry yard clean

- » remove litter, sand and grit from the aviary between batches of birds, and every 12 months for deep litter
- » thoroughly clean concrete floors, walls and wire netting with soapy water, and disinfect as needed
- » clean and disinfect feed and water containers regularly
- » don't share equipment with other poultry keepers, unless it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- » clean and disinfect poultry transport cages before and after use, and always use fresh bedding
- » keep feeding areas clean and free of excess grain to reduce the attraction of your poultry housing to wild birds and rodents.

**Disease-causing organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, protozoa, internal parasites (such as worms) and external parasites (such as ticks and lice), can accumulate in poultry housing over time. While resident adult birds may develop some resistance or immunity to these disease agents, newly introduced birds and young chicks might be highly susceptible to disease. Even resident adult birds may become sick if disease agents build up too much over time. Therefore, periodic cleaning is advisable to reduce this accumulation of disease-causing organisms.**

## 2. Avoid contact between your poultry and wild birds

- » prevent contact with wild birds by restricting access to open ponds, lakes and creeks – protective netting can also help prevent wild birds from entering domestic bird areas
- » clean up surrounding areas to reduce shelter and hiding places for wild birds
- » if you own ducks, you should also try and keep them separated from your other birds.

**Wild birds can carry bacteria and viruses that can cause disease in your flock. These disease agents may be transferred to your birds by direct contact or indirectly via bird droppings contaminating the ground, water or feed.**

**Waterfowl may carry viruses that don't affect them but may cause illness in chickens. If possible, it is best to keep waterfowl and other poultry separate to avoid transfer of viruses between species.**

## 3. Don't let feed and water become contaminated by bird droppings (faeces) or other animal waste

- » ensure water supplied to poultry is from a chlorinated mains water supply, a microbiologically clean bore, or treated with chlorine if these sources aren't available
- » don't allow wild birds or pest animals to contaminate your poultry feed - store it in a container with tight fitting lid.

**Water coming from a municipal (mains) water supply has already been treated and is ready for use by poultry. Information on sanitising other sources of water for poultry can be found in the National Water Biosecurity Manual Poultry Production (available from [www.daff.gov.au/birds](http://www.daff.gov.au/birds)). However, you should seek expert advice before adding chemicals to water used for poultry.**

#### 4. If you go to shows practice good hygiene

- » if there are signs of illness in your flock, do not take any birds to a show, even those that appear well
- » all bird equipment and permanent carrying containers should be cleaned and disinfected before and after a show
- » while at the show, exhibitors should not handle birds other than their own, but if this is necessary, exhibitors should always thoroughly wash their hands between birds
- » keep a register of all bird movements in and out of your premises, particularly to shows.

**When an infectious disease is present in a flock, it may not affect all birds equally. Some birds may appear obviously unwell, while others appear to be unaffected. Apparently unaffected birds may still carry a disease agent, however, and should not be taken to shows where the disease could spread.**

#### 5. Limit visitors to your birds

- » restrict access to bird areas
- » ask visitors to put on clean protective clothing and use foot-baths containing appropriate disinfectants at the entrance to bird areas or sheds, or provide clean boots for them to wear
- » keep a record of visitors.

**Some disease agents, including viruses, can remain infectious on clothes and other equipment for a week or more. Visitors who have handled birds may carry such disease agents on their clothes or shoes without knowing it.**

## 6. Quarantine new birds and birds returning home from shows

- » separate and monitor new poultry for at least 30 days before introducing them to your existing flock
- » always source your poultry from a reputable producer or breeder whose poultry health status is known
- » always buy healthy looking poultry
- » feed and clean quarantined poultry after you have tended to other poultry
- » birds returning home from shows should be quarantined away from the main flock for a period of at least two weeks.

**Birds may not appear sick during the early stages of an infectious disease. Therefore it is best to keep new birds separate for a while to ensure they don't develop signs of disease, before exposing your whole flock to them.**

**Birds that have been to shows or sales could pick up an infection and bring it home with them. Try to keep these birds separate from your main flock, if practical, until you are sure that they have remained well.**

## 7. Know the signs of disease

- » swollen head
- » dullness
- » drop in egg production
- » respiratory distress (gasping, coughing, sneezing)
- » diarrhoea
- » loss of appetite
- » sudden death of several or more birds.

Other potential signs include:

- » reluctance to move, eat or drink
- » droopy or 'fluffed-up' appearance
- » inability to walk or stand
- » unusual head and neck posture.

**Seek advice if you see signs of illness in your flock, especially if you have recently introduced birds or returned from a bird show.**

## **8. Immediately report any sick or dead poultry**

- » if you see any unusual symptoms in your birds or if you find that a number of them have died within a short period of time, be on the safe side and report it immediately to your local veterinarian, Department of Primary Industries or the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888**. It is essential that any suspected disease outbreak be reported immediately!

Quick containment of any emergency disease will reduce the impact on:

- » Exhibition stud poultry
- » the health of other birds - including native species
- » Australia's poultry meat and egg industries which contribute enormously to Australia's economy
- » the environment
- » human health.

For further biosecurity information contact your local veterinary surgeon, or Department of Primary Industries or Agriculture in your state or territory.

## Individual biosecurity plans

Individuals should:

- » Have a comprehensive biosecurity plan, based upon the guidance provided above.
- » Develop a biosecurity checklist that is reviewed and updated regularly.
- » Keep a journal of all matters concerned with biosecurity.

## Neighbours with ‘backyard chooks’

People with backyard poultry adopt variable biosecurity measures, and may be less fastidious about keeping things clean and introducing new birds than poultry exhibitors. This can lead to a dilemma for some registered individuals with higher standards of biosecurity. Remember, the best way to protect YOUR birds is to improve your own biosecurity using the 8 principles outlined above. This will help to exclude disease that might be present in neighbouring flocks.

Developing a positive relationship with neighbours is important. Leading the neighbour to appreciate that good practice will be mutually beneficial is most important. Explaining biosecurity and providing assistance through literature and other material in a non-threatening way may encourage the neighbour to practice good biosecurity.



## SECTION 2

### BIRD SHOW PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISERS

#### What can bird exhibitors do?

1. All bird equipment and permanent carrying containers should be cleaned and disinfected before and after a show.
2. While at the show, exhibitors should not handle birds other than their own, but if this is necessary, exhibitors should always thoroughly wash their hands between birds.
3. On returning home, show birds should always undergo a period of quarantine before re-introduction to the flock.
4. Keep a register of all bird movements in and out of your premises, particularly to shows.
5. Do not take any birds to a show if there are signs of illness in your flock.

#### What can judges do?

Judges also handle many birds from different properties, and disinfecting clothing and hands between birds is not always possible. In these situations, viral diseases such as avian influenza, if present, could spread rapidly from one bird to the next. Judges should take care to keep their clothing and equipment clean, and disinfect hands between handling birds.

It is strongly recommended that judges should wash hands and, if possible, change their overcoat between judging of waterfowl and other poultry.

## What can show organisers do?

Show organisers and club members can also do their part by keeping adequate records of exhibitors and birds attending shows and club meetings. This will be essential to aid tracing in the event of an outbreak of any emergency disease. Show organisers should:

1. Ensure whenever possible that different species are not displayed in the same pavilion - in particular, waterfowl should not be in the same area as pigeons, poultry or other birds. If only one pavilion is available, equipment should not be shared between the waterfowl exhibits and other poultry.
2. Ensure some separation between waterfowl, domestic fowl and other poultry in exhibition areas.
3. Ensure adequate hand-washing facilities are available in the exhibition area.
4. Ensure judges and stewards clean hands between handling of different exhibits.
5. Post signs in any area where animals are displayed to remind both visitors and exhibitors to wash their hands.
6. Reserve a quarantine area for sick birds if they cannot be removed from the show immediately after being recognised.
7. Use knowledgeable poultry keepers who can recognise disease to check birds on entry to exhibit areas. These people should then wash their hands before returning to the main poultry exhibition area.
8. Keep records of the names and addresses of exhibitors and people purchasing poultry at the show in case tracing of birds is required.
9. Request compulsory registration of all exhibitors with a poultry exhibition or breed association.
10. Consideration should be given to having a veterinarian present or contactable by telephone on the day(s) of the show.
11. Organisers may also wish to consider providing presentations on biosecurity principles for show employees, volunteers and participants.



# SECTION 3

## EXHIBITION STUD POULTRY AUSTRALIA, STATE ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS

### Exhibition Stud Poultry Australia will:

- » register with government as the peak body for exhibition poultry and as such be the first point of contact concerning all matters involving the exhibition poultry
- » make biosecurity a top priority
- » develop a biosecurity plan that compliments the Code of Practice developed by state associations
- » compile a register of clubs
- » compile a register of individuals
- » negotiate with Government on issues of biosecurity
- » promote biosecurity through its web site
- » keep state associations informed of all issues connected with biosecurity
- » act as a facilitator for issues raised by state associations, clubs or individuals
- » facilitate face to face meetings within the organization and with various groups on matters associated with biosecurity
- » provide leadership and be proactive in matters associated with biosecurity
- » work with Government to develop appropriate documentation to ensure that individuals and clubs understand their responsibilities towards biosecurity and develop effective record keeping strategies
- » represent exhibition poultry at any forums on biosecurity that Government may organise and report the outcomes of those forums to the state associations clubs and individuals.

## State Associations may:

- » support ESPA by disseminating information to clubs through various channels
- » ensure that biosecurity receives prominence in its Code of Practice
- » provide educational programmes on biosecurity
- » liaise with state government departments on matters concerning biosecurity
- » place biosecurity as an agenda item at delegates meetings
- » relay matters raised about biosecurity to ESPA
- » establish a page on biosecurity on their websites
- » pursue any other initiative that will heighten the awareness and importance of sound biosecurity practices.

## Clubs may:

- » provide educational programmes to promote biosecurity amongst their members
- » distribute material concerning biosecurity to members
- » contact and involve local veterinary officers
- » apply the guidelines in this manual and keep written records where appropriate.

## Individuals are encouraged to:

- » embrace the whole concept of biosecurity as an essential aspect of good husbandry practice and apply it vigorously to all aspects of their enterprise.

# APPENDIX 1

## THE RECOMMENDED HEADINGS FOR A LOG BOOK PRODUCED BY AN INDIVIDUAL<sup>1</sup>

1. Name, address etc.
2. Plan of property (yards etc.) - outline specific strategies that have been introduced
3. Disease control program

Date	Disease	Vaccination administered	Comments
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Date	Internal parasite	Treatment	Comments
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Date	External parasite	Treatment	Comments
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Date	Other treatments / medications	Date	Incidents requiring veterinary attention
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Reporting of dead or sick poultry	
Date	Name of person to whom disease was reported, and any other pertinent information

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<sup>1</sup> The amount of space you devote to each section will vary. It will also be determined by the size of the document in which you record your information

4. Show log

Date	Show	Comments (include quarantine)
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5. Quarantine of introduced birds log

Date	Source of new stock	End date	Comments
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6. Visitors log – as a security safeguard do not let visitors step into your pens to inspect or catch birds. Catch the birds yourself and hand them to the visitor outside the pen. Practice hygiene, wash hands etc.

Date	Visitors name, address, contact number	Poultry contact in last 36 hours	Reason for visit
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7. Rodent log

Date	Time	Bait station site and level	Activity level	Corrective action / comments
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8. Management log – anecdotal comments on issues raised in the Biosecurity Manual

Issue	Comment
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9. Incidental review of biosecurity programme

Date	Positive outcomes	Areas of concern and action planned
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10. Other comments

Date	Comments
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11. Other information – devise any other records that you might consider useful to your biosecurity plan

# Notes



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