

Heightened Biosecurity During Spring Planting

It is extremely important for poultry farmers to minimize the risk of introducing fecal material from wild birds into poultry operations. The Avian Influenza (AI) virus can survive for extended periods of time in the environment, particularly in cooler weather. With planting season fast approaching, it is important to realize that tilling and planting equipment will cover every inch of fields that may have been contaminated by wild birds. Water, wet soil and feces can become contaminated with AI and linger after the migrating flock has moved on. Soil and wild bird feces can stick to tires and undercarriages of vehicles, including field equipment and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and be easily spread to other locations.

Follow these guidelines to help mitigate the risk of spreading the virus:

- Wash vehicles between farms, paying close attention to the vehicle tires and wheel wells.
- For footwear, remove obvious mud and organic matter first and then scrub boots especially the bottom tread with a brush and hose. Ensure adequate contact time and concentrations for commercial disinfectants – be sure to read and follow the label!
- Clean all equipment used on farm that could become contaminated.
- Planting and tilling equipment should be kept away from poultry barns and from driveways servicing poultry premises. Avoid contaminating ground areas near poultry barns.
- Avoid driving near barns that contain live birds, if possible. If not, drive slowly to minimize dust.
- Avoid parking by exhaust fans and air inlets unless required as part of loading or unloading.
- Keep records identifying who has been on-farm and where/when equipment and vehicles have travelled.
- After using equipment, shower and change clothing and boots before entering a poultry barn.
- If possible, close curtains on the side of the barn that faces a field where tilling is occurring, particularly in dry and/or windy conditions, to reduce the risk of viral particles blowing into the barn.

If your birds show any signs of illness, call your veterinarian immediately. It is also recommended that you contact the 24-hour Feather Board Command Centre (FBCC) support line, 1-877-SOS-BYRD.

Visit the Feather Board Command Centre's website at www.fbcc.ca for more information.

