



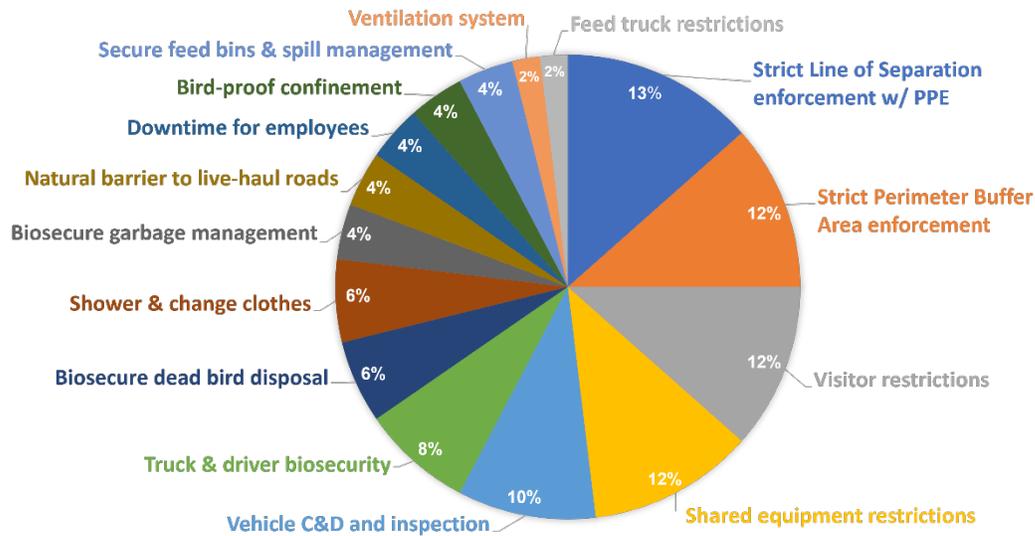
**Questions & Answers from
Preventing Avian Influenza Introductions: Focus on the Big Risks
September 2021**

I don't see focus on proactive, preventive measures such as, early detection, therapies, and vaccinations.

In this webinar, we focused on biosecurity to prevent avian influenza from entering a flock, because we strongly believe that biosecurity is more important than any other preventive measure. Early detection and surveillance definitely inform biosecurity decisions and would be good topics to add to our queue of ideas for future webinars. Currently, no treatment or vaccination for avian influenza is approved for use in U.S. poultry. In fact, that's why biosecurity is the only reliable approach for farmers to use to address avian influenza.

If we need to consider and treat 14 factors, could you put the weight on each factor among 100 points?

Dr. Cardona's pie chart that we displayed during the presentation shows the relative importance of biosecurity measures, although the categories don't match up precisely with the 14 NPIP Biosecurity Principles. Here is the chart with the weights labeled:



Notice that four categories alone account for 49 out of 100 points! These categories match well with four of the 14 NPIP Biosecurity Principles; they are #3 - Line of Separation, #4 – Perimeter Buffer Area, #5 – Personnel, and #7 – Equipment and Vehicles. We recommend that these four be given the most attention when designing and enforcing any flock’s biosecurity plan.

How does the agency ensure biosecurity measures are actually being used? Requiring a plan does not guarantee adherence to that plan. I've heard from many workers at industrialized operations that biosecurity stations (e.g., car washes, boot washes, showers, etc.) are routinely skipped.

In the United States, Federal and State animal health officials enforce quarantines and biosecurity measures when a farm is affected by avian influenza or involved in other regulated disease control activities, generally under the State’s authority to contain and control animal diseases. On unaffected farms with healthy flocks, farm owners and managers are responsible for ensuring that anyone who enters the farm follows the site-specific biosecurity plan.

We agree that compliance with a biosecurity plan – making sure everyone properly follows the plan, every time - is a big challenge! In the webinar, we discussed several strategies to improve compliance. To recap a few of these strategies:

1. *Make it easy to do the right thing. Provide safe, comfortable personal protective gear and changing areas. Block short-cuts, such as side doors, and provide time-saving procedures, such as slipping on dedicated footwear rather than standing in a foot bath, counting down dwell time.*
2. *Provide training that makes an impact. Deliver training in workers' native languages. Provide hands-on demonstrations rather than relying on written handouts. Refresh the training in frequent, short sessions. Assign mentors for new employees and provide escorts for visitors.*
3. *Biosecurity is for everyone so, make sure that everyone participates and follows the rules. This needs to include supervisors and owners too. When people come to the farm for any reason, make sure they follow all the biosecurity rules. Actions speak louder than words.*

The poultry litter from one place is transported to another for use as an organic manure. In my opinion, this transfer leads to virus and bacteria dissemination to the nearby poultry farms where manure is used, and it is a neglected issue. What is your position on this? How long the litter manure must be hold in the farm to make it virus free? Or any treatment needed prior to litter transfer?

NPIP Biosecurity Principle #9 acknowledges that manure and litter should be managed to prevent the spread of disease-causing germs. Manure and spent litter should be removed, stored, and disposed of in a manner to prevent exposure of susceptible poultry to disease agents. Onsite litter and manure storage should limit attraction of wild birds, rodents, insects, and other animals.

Composting is one method that U.S. poultry farmers use successfully and routinely to kill disease agents in manure and litter and make these materials safe to move and apply to land as valuable fertilizer. For details about the time and temperature required to properly compost manure and litter from poultry flocks, several Cooperative Extension publications are available online, including these two:

<https://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/CIS/CIS1194.pdf>, and
<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/Info%20319.pdf>.

State health and environmental agencies regulate transportation and land application of manure and litter. To learn about the rules in your area, you can find and contact your State's agency using this directory: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/health-and-environmental-agencies-us-states-and-territories>

In a barn with 2 different flocks in it, even though they are separated completely by a center wall but under the same roof. is it necessary or beneficial to change clothing and boots for these 2 flocks on daily walk throughs?

The first question to ask is do you intend for these two flocks to be distinct biosecure units? If you do, it is entirely possible that a wall is a good start. Make sure the wall is solid and prevents movements of birds or rodents. Don't forget to look up, is the wall complete or can small birds fly between the chambers or can dust move between the barns? Consider other ways that disease agents can move between flocks such as through shared (continuous) water or feedlines. If birds in the two flocks are truly separate, then it makes sense to have a line of separation around each and change clothes, boots and enter the barns separately. If they are not separate, we suggest that you draw and enforce your line of separation around the entire house.

Finally, to evaluate the separation, follow the movement of endemic disease and live vaccines that you apply. Do they spread between the flocks? If so, then look for places that your separation has broken down or make them into a single unit.

I'm a small farmer, I have guinea hens, ducks, chickens, sheep and 2 miniature donkeys have spent a lot of money on finding out what is wrong with some of my chickens or ducks when they are sick. I have a chicken who had cancer, a rooster who got severely injured and became disabled, and a disabled duck who can't walk. Some veterinarians charge a lot of money just to check them out, let alone x rays etc. Is there training from USDA that flock owners can take?

USDA supports the Cooperative Extension Service, which offers agricultural training of all kinds, including small flock management, to farmers all over the country. Contact your State or county Cooperative Extension office to learn about the resources they provide. A map and directory of Extension offices is available at this website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory?state=All&type=Extension>.

A licensed veterinarian is your best resource for treating individual sick or injured birds in a small flock like yours, although many will not treat poultry, as you have found. If you find a veterinarian to work with, they can learn from the same resources available to you from Cooperative Extension and along with the skills they have as veterinarians work with you. Many states have extension specialists that work with veterinarians to improve their poultry skills.

In addition, veterinary diagnostic laboratories across the United States can test poultry for diseases, which can help you and your veterinarian diagnose health concerns. To find a veterinary diagnostic laboratory near you, check this directory of accredited labs:

<https://www.aavid.org/accredited-labs>.