



The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Athens, Georgia 30602-4356

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HATCHERY/BREEDER TIP . . .

BIOSECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

Biosecurity is a method of management designed to reduce the potential for introduction and spread of disease. In a poultry company biosecurity should be consistently in the awareness of every employee of the company including contract growers and their employees. Ideally, the company should provide frequent education to all parties regarding the purpose of biosecurity, the current program of biosecurity, and to seek input on how the program can be strengthened.

The history of the company, including how and where the individual components were constructed, can have a large impact on designing a biosecurity program. There are many examples of companies that were founded four or five decades ago where the company president/owner wanted to be able to look out the office window to see his feed mill, hatchery, and processing plant. This situation has created a biosecurity nightmare. For example, the quality of air entering the hatchery is of critical concern in preventing contamination. Air entering the hatchery typically comes in from the roof and is filtered. However, feed mills and processing plants spread considerable quantities of dust and feathers into the surrounding area. With this contamination in the air surrounding a hatchery there is a very real potential to contaminate the hatchery environment. In a case such as this the hatchery manager must pay more attention to detail in his ventilation and sanitation systems. Air filters need more frequent cleaning and replacement than when the hatchery is located in an isolated area. Fogging and disinfecting the various hatchery rooms becomes much more critical.

The poultry company should provide a very detailed written biosecurity program to all employees and growers and conduct educational meetings which cover biosecurity topics and problems. When there are disease breaks in an area that is densely populated with poultry companies and farms, industry educational programs to discuss biosecurity in general and the current disease prevention in particular management are warranted. In the state of Georgia, we are fortunate to have two outstanding organizations, the Georgia Poultry Federation and the State Poultry Diagnostic

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.
The Cooperative Extension service officers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability
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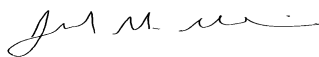
Laboratories, that respond quickly and effectively to disease crises. Examples of their effective action include the national crises of Avian Influenza and statewide outbreaks of Laryngotracheitis. Certainly these disease outbreaks would have been more severe and devastating had it not been for the thoughtful actions of the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Georgia Poultry Federation.

When a company program of biosecurity is designed, it should have input from all parties involved in the day-to-day operation of the firm. Human nature dictates that a program will not succeed if everyone involved does not realize its importance. It is very likely that employees such as chick bus drivers or vaccination crew members will have excellent ideas for establishing or improving biosecurity. When all employees, from upper management to live haul crew to growers, are sold on the importance and benefits of a strong biosecurity program, the potential for that program to succeed will be significantly increased.

Dedication to the biosecurity program must not only be communicated in written form, but must also be demonstrated by consistent actions by employees representing the company. When service personnel visit a poultry farm it is vital that they eagerly follow all biosecurity procedures that are in keeping with company policy. The company procedures need to be frequently discussed with each grower. Frequently, growers may have good ideas that strengthen the program. Biosecurity fails when a service person or visitor refuses to follow even a minute detail of the company program. Since service personnel visit many farms each day there is a potential to spread organisms from site to site. A good policy would be for the younger flocks to be serviced early in the day and older flocks to be serviced later each day.

Looking at the international picture, we in the U.S. are used to the latest technology in production systems. Our birds are kept more comfortable here than in most other places in the world. We buy the newest labor saving automation technology for farms, hatcheries, feedmills, processing plants, and offices. However, as a country, the U.S. is behind in having good biosecurity.

It is interesting to note that many poultry companies in developing nations have much better biosecurity programs than are found in the U.S. This is especially true at the integrator level. Typical integrators in these countries have biosecurity systems that rival what we see here at the primary breeder level. In most operations in Latin America to visit a broiler operation, company personnel must accompany the visitor. They first pass through a security gate, wheel dip, vehicle wash, and shower-in facilities. In many cases visitors also have to shower out. Their motto is "bring nothing in and take nothing out". Biosecurity is expensive to do correctly, but may be much more expensive if it is done incorrectly. In today's poultry product market with food safety concerns, the U.S. poultry industry would benefit significantly in reducing pathogens by incorporating more stringent biosecurity programs.



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Consult with your poultry company representative before making management changes