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People

People go into every poultry house and need to handle poultry for various tasks, such as vaccination, AI of turkey breeders and weighing. Thus, people can have prolonged close contact with birds so they are a real biosecurity risk. Remember, the closer they get to the birds or the longer the contact, the greater the risk this person presents.

People can bring disease causing micro-organisms into the poultry shed in two ways. Firstly, their clothes and footwear can carry the micro-organisms and in effect be a fomite or, secondly, they themselves can be 'infected'. Good examples of this are salmonella and some of the respiratory viruses, such as avian influenza and Newcastle disease. Respiratory viruses and mycoplasma can also be carried in man's nasal passages and discharged by sneezing.

Farm staff

People coming on to your farm fall into two categories – staff and visitors. The real risk with staff is that they spend long periods of time in a flock and often handle birds. There are two facets to managing the risk represented by staff. Firstly, make sure they do not get contaminated at home. This means no owning of poultry, pigeons or game birds and no visiting of other poultry farms.

Secondly, when staff come to work you are going to do all you can to decontaminate them. The extent to which this stage goes depends on the value of your birds and the perceived risks. For example, a large breeder farm in a poultry dense area would do far more than a small broiler farmer in an area devoid of poultry.

At one extreme it is a comprehensive shower and putting on company owned clothes and using sanitising hand gels before going into each house, while at the other it might just be a case of using a pair of the farmer's wellington boots.

It is also important to ensure that staff always use the toilet(s) provided and always thoroughly wash their hands afterwards.

Staff food must never go into the poultry houses. It should be confined to the designated canteen area.

Visitors

Everything that applies to staff should also apply to visitors. In one sense, visitors represent a greater risk because many of them could have visited other poultry. Therefore, the importance of only letting essential visitors on to your farm can not be emphasised enough!

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