



Defend the Flock Newsletter / Winter Edition 2022

Defend the Flock: Your Biosecurity Bulletin

TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS:

Preventing Avian Influenza Introductions: Focus on the Big Risks

USDA APHIS hosted a free webinar that provided an opportunity to learn about the introduction of avian influenza into commercial flocks and how to mitigate risks.

The webinar featured Dr. Julie Gauthier with the USDA, Dr. Carol Cardona, Pomeroy Chair in Avian Health for the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Tim Boyer, Ph.D. a biological scientist with the Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health at USDA APHIS.

You can listen to a replay of the webinar and see the follow-up Q&A at the [Defend the Flock](#) Resource Center, under the "Webinars" tab.

Q&A Vet for a Day: A Talk with Dr. Annika McKillop

We asked Dr. Annika McKillop, Veterinary Medical Officer USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, what it is like to "Defend our Flocks."



What is your poultry background? I was an Animal Science Major in undergrad and lived and worked at the school farm for almost two years. We had 16,000 layers, a Japanese Quail breeding colony, and several research projects on immunology and nutrition in broilers, ducks, and turkeys. I got involved in the research and worked in the laboratory processing research samples. I later gained industry experience working as a veterinarian for Aviagen Turkeys.

For about 7.5 years, I had my own veterinary practice in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia where approximately 95% of my clientele were small flocks, as well as some contract work with small breeders and egg layer flocks. Now I work at USDA/APHIS in Veterinary Services in Animal Products Import and Export.

How does biosecurity and caring for commercial poultry differ from small flocks? Biosecurity and caring for small flocks is VERY similar to commercial flocks. The only difference is the housing and the number of birds. Most of the issues I saw in small flocks were either related to breaches in biosecurity (introducing birds without proper quarantine and testing, therefore bringing diseases to existing flocks) or management-related (improper housing, injuries due to predators, and imbalanced diet).

With a private practice that was exclusively mobile, how did you handle biosecurity? I handled every visit the same exact way to make sure I wasn't spreading diseases between my clients. I would visit commercial

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— SAVE THE DATE — BIRD HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

February 28–March 4, 2022

New *Defend the Flock* webinar and resources for small flock owners/enthusiasts

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and check the [Defend the Flock](#) website for updates

Report Sick Birds

If you see signs of illness, take action right away!

Veterinarian

Cooperative Extension Office

State Veterinarian/Animal or Poultry Diagnostic Lab

USDA

Phone Number

866.536.7593





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New Look! Refreshed Website Now Includes Spanish-Language Resource Page

USDA recently refreshed the entire Defend the Flock website. As part of the refresh, all Spanish-language campaign resources can now easily be found in one place. Users will be able to download Spanish checklists, social graphics, and much more.

Centro de Recursos de Defend the Flock (Español)



You can explore the website, campaign resources, and more detailed biosecurity information at the Defend the Flock homepage.

El Centro de Recursos de Defend the Flock está diseñado para proporcionar recursos gratuitos en inglés y otros idiomas, incluidos catálogos, videotutoriales, agendas educativas, certificaciones y profesionales de la industria. Toda la información que necesita para implementar mejores prácticas de bioseguridad está disponible aquí. Incluye listas de verificación, guías de recursos, videos, y otros herramientas.

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

The recent detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild birds serves as a reminder to all poultry owners and handlers to protect their flocks. Review your biosecurity plan and enhance your biosecurity practices today.

Prevent contact between your birds and wild birds. Report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials, either through their state veterinarian or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

Visit our resource center for more ways to defend your flock.

Q&A Vet for a Day: A Talk with Dr. Annika McKillop

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flocks at the beginning of the week and then small flocks towards the end. My car was washed before seeing every client. I wore personal protective equipment, including a hairnet, coveralls over my clothes, disposable booties, gloves, and facemask. Everything that came out of my car was cleaned and disinfected before going back into my vehicle. (Even money/checks were sprayed with disinfectant!) Any exposed skin was either washed or wiped down with a cleansing wipe, hand sanitizer was used, and my shoes were sprayed with disinfectants before entering my vehicle, even though they were covered and technically never touched the ground. Poultry can carry diseases and not show symptoms, so I was careful wherever I went.

When you speak to youth groups, what do you want them to focus on? I emphasize that poultry diseases spread very easily. One of the best things they can do for their flock is to have dedicated shoes, wash their hands, and wear clean or dedicated clothing when working with their birds. I also recommend that they change their clothes and wash their hands afterwards for their own safety, so they do not get Salmonella, E. coli, or other diseases. I also advise them to stay away from auctions, bird swaps, Facebook, or sites like Craigslist when starting or adding to their flock. They should instead focus on finding a supplier that is negative for poultry diseases and vaccinated for Marek's Disease.



What made you decide to specialize in poultry? I fell in love working with poultry since they are physiologically different than mammals; their environment has such an impact on their well-being and production.

Dr. McKillop using personal protective equipment when getting to a property.

For more information about how to keep your flocks healthy, follow Defend the Flock on Facebook and Twitter and visit www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock.

