Secure Egg Supply (SES) Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

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Q1: What is the SES Plan?
A1: A public-private-academic partnership, the SES Plan facilitates market continuity in the face of a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak. It promotes food security, food safety, and animal health. The SES Plan provides guidance and requirements for the movement of eggs and egg industry products during an HPAI outbreak.

Q2: Why is there a need for an SES Plan?
A2: HPAI is a significant animal disease threat to domestic poultry. In an HPAI outbreak, all stakeholders want to control the spread of this disease, and at the same time give consumers confidence that eggs and egg industry products moving into the market are free from HPAI. These important reasons are why we have developed the SES Plan.

Q3: How does the SES Plan support the needs of the public as well as market continuity?
A3: Using the science-based and risk-based recommendations, the SES Plan offers a high degree of confidence to consumers that eggs and egg industry products that are allowed to move do not contain HPAI. It allows producers to move eggs, under prescribed requirements, to alleviate storage limitations. The Plan also reduces the likelihood that HPAI will be transmitted to uninfected flocks through diligent cleaning and disinfection and biosecurity measures. The SES Plan fosters confidence in government and industry disease preparedness and response.

Q4: What are the components of the SES Plan?
A4: The SES Plan has risk assessments and permit guidance instructions for eight different egg commodities including pasteurized liquid eggs, non-pasteurized liquid egg, washed and sanitized shell eggs, nest run shell eggs, layering hatching eggs, layer day-old chicks, and shells and inedible egg product. It also has supplemental materials that are designed to help facilitate implementing the SES Plan. The supplemental materials include:

- Supplement 1: Surveillance guidelines
- Supplement 2: Cleaning and disinfection guidelines
- Supplement 3: Permitted movement checklists
- Supplement 4: Proactive product-specific risk assessments
- Supplement 5: Permit examples
- Supplement 6: The Voluntary Preparedness Components

Q5: What does the SES Plan do?
A5: The SES Plan:

- Defines the preparedness and response components for moving eggs and egg industry products.
- Describes the proactive risk assessments for the egg commodities.
- Provides surveillance, biosecurity, and diagnostic requirements for the movement of various egg industry products.
- Provides permit guidance and example permit forms.
- Presents the voluntary preparedness components.
- Supplies an epidemiological questionnaire.

Together, these elements support market continuity for the egg sector, as well as food security, and animal health.

Q6: How does the SES Plan function to allow movement of eggs and egg industry products during an outbreak?
A6: During an outbreak, the SES Plan is a tool to provide guidance for regulatory agencies and industry to move eggs and egg products with a high degree of confidence. To accomplish this, the SES Plan provides surveillance, risk assessments, biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection practices, and permitting guidance for moving different types of eggs and egg industry products. Based on the proactive risk assessments for each egg industry product, premises that meet SES Plan permit guidance requirements are eligible to move the product from the premises to the product destination.

Q7: What are these proactive risk assessments?
A7: The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (part of the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service [USDA APHIS]), in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, has conducted proactive risk assessments specifically for the SES Plan. These proactive risk assessments are analytical models which evaluate the spread and detection of HPAI during an outbreak. They are based on the specific requirements (like biosecurity and cleaning and disinfection) of the SES Plan, as well as poultry industry standards of operation and applicable Federal regulations. The proactive risk assessments can be used by decision makers to assess the risk of HPAI transmission in issuing permits to move eggs and egg industry products during an HPAI outbreak.

Q8: What biosecurity measures are required by the SES Plan?
A8: For all premises, the SES Plan describes permit requirements, including truck and driver biosecurity steps as well as product-specific measures for particular types of eggs or egg industry products (for example, biosecurity measures specific to washed and sanitized shell eggs).

Q9: Can you explain the diagnostic testing requirements for product movement?
A9: A scientifically sound sampling system has been developed based on the way HPAI virus is spread within and between egg layer type facilities. The samples taken are tested for the presence of influenza virus, with a real-time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) test. This test is the most sensitive rapid test available. Egg industry products (other than pasteurized liquid egg and cooked egg) are moved based on negative tests.

Q10: What is the epidemiological questionnaire, and who fills it out?
A10: The epidemiological questionnaire asks questions to determine whether a premise has been exposed to infected birds, animals, people, or contaminated materials or products. Premises participating in the voluntary preparedness component of the SES plan will have previously filled out the questionnaire and submitted the data to a portal, but may need to update it at the time of the outbreak. Usually the farm manager will fill out the questionnaire.

Q11: **Why are there so many requirements?**
A11: Requiring biosecurity, repeated diagnostic tests, and other measures allows the SES Plan to provide a high degree of confidence that eggs and egg industry products do not contribute to animal health risk, and when moved into market channels, do not contain the HPAI virus. These biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection, surveillance, and diagnostic requirements are based on the best available science and proactive risk assessments to ensure consumers, producers, responders, and other stakeholders that HPAI is not being transmitted between premises and

that egg commodities are not a high risk for HPAI transmission.

Q12: How will the SES Plan be implemented?
A12: To be implemented in large-scale, the SES Plan needs to be adopted by States through incorporation into their HPAI or foreign animal disease response plans. Implementation of the plan at the State level occurs through adoption of the requirements for moving eggs and egg industry products during a HPAI outbreak. These requirements are:

- Egg premises and product-specific biosecurity;
- Epidemiologic assessment;
- Monitoring of production parameters to ensure they are normal;
- rRT-PCR testing of chickens in each house; and
- Product-specific risk assessments.

Q14: I've heard about the Voluntary Preparedness Component. How does this fit into the SES Plan?
A14: The Voluntary Preparedness Component of the SES Plan. Developed by the Center for Food Security and Public Health, at Iowa State University, in collaboration with the egg industry, poultry veterinarians, and USDA APHIS can help producers move eggs more quickly.

The Voluntary Preparedness Component has four components for an egg premises that chooses to voluntarily enroll prior to an outbreak:

- Audited minimum biosecurity standards: Biosecurity Checklist;
- Location verification of participating farms;
- Epidemiology data to identify potential exposure: Epidemiological Questionnaire; and
- Active surveillance in each layer house via rRT-PCR testing (as indicated by the surveillance guidelines).

Through pre-enrollment in this voluntary program, premises can get preapproval for their biosecurity practices and have epidemiological information readily available to officials in the event an HPAI outbreak occurs. This portion of the plan is one of the SES Plan's safeguarding components that can help prepare stakeholders to respond effectively in an HPAI outbreak.

Q15: Is the Voluntary Preparedness Component Plan REQUIRED to move eggs during an outbreak?
A15: This is a ***voluntary*** component of the SES Plan and is not required to move eggs during an outbreak. However, implementing this component prior to an outbreak will help speed the process for egg movement during a HPAI outbreak.

Q16: **Is the SES Plan final?**
A16: The SES Plan is a dynamic document that will be updated and revised with additional risk assessments, further stakeholder input, and new scientific information. All revisions will be founded on the science and risk-based approach to HPAI preparedness and response identified by our stakeholders.

Q17: Where do I go to get more information?
A17: The Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response website (FAD PReP) and the SES website provide additional information: www.secureeggsupply.com or www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/emergency_management/materials_ref.shtml
If you would like to speak with someone to learn more about the SES Plan, including implementation or exercising, please go to www.secureeggsupply.com and contact us!