



Defend the Flock Newsletter / Summer Edition 2021

# Defend the Flock: Your Biosecurity Bulletin

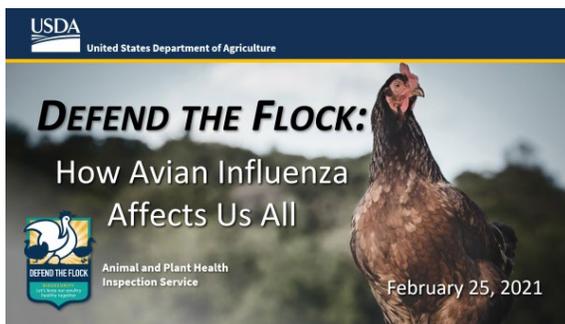
## TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS:

### Defend the Flock: How Avian Influenza Affects Us All

USDA APHIS hosted a free webinar that shared first-hand accounts of how devastating poultry disease outbreaks such as avian influenza can be to poultry keepers and their communities and the importance of making biosecurity an everyday practice.

The webinar featured Dr. Julie Gauthier with the USDA, Dr. Dale Lauer from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, Dr. Rocio Crespo, from NC State University, and Dr. Denise Heard, from the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association.

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. Fidelis (Fidel) Njell Hegngi

We asked Dr. Fidel Njell Hegngi, Senior Staff Veterinarian at USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, what it is like to "Defend our Flocks."



**1. How did you become involved with poultry medicine?** *I came to the United States from Cameroon with plans to study medicine. As an undergrad I had the opportunity to take poultry classes and, in spite of being a city boy, realized I enjoyed working with chickens. This ultimately led to a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine and advanced studies in avian and poultry medicine at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.*

*Since then, I have worked as a private small animal veterinarian, at commercial poultry facilities, as director of an animal diagnostic laboratory, as an assistant state veterinarian, and finally at the federal level with USDA APHIS.*

**2. You have been with USDA APHIS for 17 years. How have biosecurity practices changed over this time?** *When I joined APHIS 17 years ago, we were recovering from the virulent Newcastle disease (vND) outbreak of 2002-2003. That outbreak mostly affected backyard flocks and APHIS realized the need to include backyard growers in biosecurity planning and education. This resulted in the Biosecurity for Birds campaign, an early version of Defend the Flock. Then we had the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak of 2014-2015, which mostly spread within commercial poultry producers. APHIS worked with the poultry industry and the official state agencies (OSA) to officially develop the NPIP's 14 Biosecurity Principles. These principles are the basis of the Defend the Flock checklists which you can download for free at the [Defend the Flock Resource Center](#).*

continued

## Report Sick Birds

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

<p><b>Veterinarian</b></p> <p><b>Cooperative Extension Office</b></p> <p><b>State Veterinarian/Animal or Poultry Diagnostic Lab</b></p> <p><b>USDA</b></p>	<p><b>Phone Number</b></p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>866.536.7593</b></p>
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# — SAVE THE DATE —

## PREVENTING AVIAN INFLUENZA INTRODUCTIONS: FOCUS ON THE BIG RISKS

Thursday, September 23, 2021  
2:30-3:30 P.M. ET

New *Defend the Flock* webinar

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

### Be a #FlockDefender!

#### New Poultry Biosecurity Outreach Effort Aimed at Youth and Student Audiences

Youth are the future of our nation's poultry farming and industry. The #FlockDefender outreach program shares the agency's existing *Defend the Flock* message that encourages and prepares all poultry owners to implement diligent biosecurity practices with future and aspiring growers. APHIS provides youth, students and their leaders and teachers with many electronic resources they can use during meetings, classes and when caring for their flocks. APHIS is also encouraging these young poultry enthusiasts to share [photos](#) of their poultry or biosecurity practices.



*Show off your flock!* Share photos of your poultry or biosecurity practices with us. We will use your pictures on the *Defend the Flock* social media pages.

## Q&A Vet for a Day: A Talk with Dr. Fidelis (Fidel) Njell Hegngi

*continued*

**3. Are there differences in the way you address biosecurity with specific audiences?** *There is no one size fits all. With backyard growers, I stress the importance of cleanliness, water and food storage, and keeping sick birds separate. It's human nature to be neighborly and share but it's not neighborly to spread disease, so it's necessary to clean and disinfect tools. I also stress the importance of recognizing signs of poultry disease, what to do, and who to call. For commercial premises, biosecurity plans have to take into account structural components, employees, large equipment, and efficiency—hence a stronger emphasis on Lines of Separation or Perimeter Buffer Areas. Biosecurity is always a team effort.*

**4. APHIS has launched a biosecurity campaign geared to youth and student poultry owners. What message would you give these young poultry growers?** *Don't think of biosecurity as an expense, but as an investment in your birds' health. It may seem like a difficult concept,*



*but it's about being practical and using common sense to prevent transmission of disease. Also, be mindful of "real life" circumstances that may lead to breaches, such as the weather. Don't drop your guard because it's too cold or you don't want to be out in the rain. Look at it like life insurance—when you need it, hope that you have it.*

*"Biosecurity is a shared responsibility between all of us. These outbreaks demonstrate how disease can easily spread among all poultry, whether backyard or commercial. The approach to biosecurity may be different due to flock size or type of grower but the basic concepts remain the same."*

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](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock).

