

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Restocking Your Bird Flock: Getting Back to Business After HPAI

The last step—and ultimate goal—of an animal disease response is to get you, the producer, back in business. This is a very important step, and one that has to be done carefully to help protect the health of the animals that are being restocked. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and your State animal health officials need to make sure your farm is free from the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus before new birds enter your property. No one wants the new birds to become infected. With the hard work of the response now almost complete, there's too much at stake for the whole process to start over.

Approval To Restock

It's essential that restocking and returning to production after an HPAI detection is not done too early.

Federal and State animal health officials will first check that all prior steps in the response process are finished. This includes, among other things, cleanup efforts, required waiting periods, and confirmation that the farm's animal production areas are now virus-free. Restocking can occur no sooner than 21 days after virus elimination work is complete. During those 21 days, all environmental testing must be completed and come back negative for the HPAI virus.

Animal health officials will also review the conditions in the surrounding area to make sure there is not an undue risk of new birds being exposed to the HPAI virus. Some States may have further criteria you must meet, like putting in place a specific biosecurity measure that the State can audit, before you can be approved to restock. When you meet these requirements and conditions, Federal and State officials will then approve that you can restock your farm with new animals.

You will receive written approval to restock. The document will be signed by both Federal and State animal health officials, and it will include specific requirements you must follow for restocking and for continued biosecurity afterward. You will need to review and sign the agreement.

Restocking

We realize that when returning to production after a disease outbreak, not all producers will be able to fully restock immediately upon approval. The timing will depend on several things, including the type of facility (meat production versus layer), the availability of poults or pullets, and business decisions.

It's essential that restocking and returning to production after an HPAI detection is not done too soon. No one wants the new birds to become infected. With the hard work of the response now almost complete, there's too much at stake for the whole process to start over.

It will be up to you, the producer, to determine how and when to restock once you have approval. You must test all birds used to restock your farm for HPAI, and they must test negative before they can be moved onto the farm. The minimum standard is two negative tests at least 24 hours apart; one of these tests must happen no more than 1 day before the birds are moved. It is your responsibility to cover the cost of this testing and arrange for it. Your case manager can advise on who to contact.

After Restocking

When you do begin to restock your farm, it is vital to make sure everyone who enters your farm follows strict biosecurity guidelines. This is to protect against future introductions of the HPAI virus. These biosecurity measures will be detailed in your restocking approval document. General requirements for all restocked farms are listed below; however, animal health officials may include other measures.

Basic Biosecurity for Restocked Farms

Producers restocking after HPAI must agree to follow these biosecurity steps:

- Have cleaning and disinfection procedures in place for all movement onto the farm and all movement into and between barns.
- Enforce personnel-specific biosecurity measures, including that clothing worn inside the barn not be worn outside.
- Keep wild birds and rodents out of the barn structure.
- Make sure feed and water are not contaminated by wild birds or their feces.
- Immediately fix any environmental factors—such as standing water, feed spills, etc.—that may attract wild birds.
- Stop visits by non-essential personnel.

Moving Forward

As you move forward, continue to ensure that your staff members and vendors follow the required biosecurity procedures.

USDA, State animal health officials, and industry have created resources to help producers develop, evaluate, and certify that they have strong biosecurity practices in place. These materials are available online through USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/aiupdates; click on "Checklist for Self-Assessment of Enhanced Poultry Biosecurity" under the "Other Materials" heading) or the U.S. Poultry Association (www.uspoultry.org/animal_husbandry/assessment.cfm).

For More Information

If you have specific questions, talk with your case manager or call the nearest USDA office (www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/state-offices).

For general information on HPAI and emergency response, go to www.usda.gov/avian_influenza.html and www.aphis.usda.gov/fadprep.

Protect against future introductions of the HPAI virus! When you do begin to restock your farm, make sure everyone who enters your farm follows strict biosecurity guidelines.

ACTIONS YOU NEED TO TAKE

1. Review and sign the restocking agreement. By signing, you agree to follow the requirements for testing and biosecurity measures outlined in the document.
2. Decide when and how you want to restock your farm.
3. When purchasing birds to restock, have them tested for HPAI. The birds must test negative for HPAI before you can move them onto your farm.
4. Put in place the required biosecurity measures at your property and make sure everyone who enters your farm follows them.

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