



Defend The Flock Newsletter / Summer Edition 2019

# Defend the Flock: Your Biosecurity Bulletin

## Q&A Vet for a Day: A Talk with Dr. Chrislyn Wood Nicholson

We asked Dr. Chrislyn Wood Nicholson, DVM, Veterinary Medical Officer/Poultry Specialist in USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services what it's like to "Defend our Flocks."



### 1. Why did you specialize in poultry medicine?

*I've always loved animals and cared about human health. I became a Veterinary Medical Officer because the work I do protects poultry and keeps people safe. Poultry meat and eggs are an important food protein source around the world.*

### 2. How do you know when there is an outbreak?

*We find out because the laboratory confirms avian influenza virus through routine testing surveillance or when someone reports sick or dead birds, and follow up testing is done.*

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## Defend the Flock Campaign: Biosecurity Protects Our Birds

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) brings commercial and backyard poultry growers together in the *Defend the Flock* campaign to keep our flocks healthy.

Diseases like avian influenza are the number one threat against our nation's poultry. This campaign gives anyone who works with birds the biosecurity tools they need to protect our flocks. Checklists, videos, webinars and other educational resources can be found 24/7 at the [Resource Center](#). Follow *Defend the Flock* on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for up-to-the-minute news and information.

Become a Flock Defender and keep our nation's flocks – and people – safe from infectious diseases.

## Seasonal Tips for Biosecurity

Spring and summer are the time to introduce new birds. Follow these guidelines to prevent the spread of disease:



**Choose Wisely:** Purchase replacement birds from National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPPI)-participating breeders, hatcheries and/or dealers.

**Travel Safely:** Clean and disinfect all equipment used for transport. Dispose of empty cages safely or clean and decontaminate them if being taken to another site.

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## 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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**3. What's the first thing you do when there's an outbreak?** We get as much information as possible to limit the spread of disease by placing a quarantine to restrict movement from the affected farm. We notify the USDA, the state department of agriculture, and other involved parties (feed trucks, service technicians, area poultry industry groups, etc.). Our staff may go door to door in an infected area to examine birds for testing to make sure other poultry farms in the area are safe.

**4. What should I do if there's an outbreak in my area?** The most important thing is communication. Listen and share news with your neighbors, state department of agriculture and the USDA APHIS personnel who will be in the area.

**5. What do you want poultry growers to know?** I want them to understand the severity of avian influenza. Highly pathogenic avian influenza can kill more than half a flock in one to two days. We have a shared responsibility for defending our flocks.

**6. What's the best part of your job?** I love getting to work one on one with poultry owners, teaching them biosecurity/disease prevention strategies to show them how to keep their birds healthy.

*"We raise awareness among commercial and backyard bird owners by providing information about biosecurity through programs such as **Defend the Flock**, and we continuously conduct crisis scenarios in the field."*

—Dr. Chrislyn Wood Nicholson

## Guidance for Commercial Growers



Always transport replacement poultry in equipment and vehicles that are regularly cleaned, disinfected and inspected.

## Seasonal Tips for Biosecurity

continued

**Standardize Tests:** Test your new poultry for the same diseases for which your current flock has been tested.

**Separate Newcomers:** Quarantine new birds from the rest of your flock for at least 30 days and watch carefully for signs of sickness. If you see sneezing, coughing, nasal drainage, swollen eyes, mites, lice or other issues, report them immediately to your state veterinarian or call the USDA toll-free hotline: 1-866-536-7593.

**Keep Clean:** Whether it's a commercial operation or backyard coop, always adhere to the highest standards of cleanliness and safety for birds.

For more information, visit the [Defend the Flock Resource Center](#). It's updated all the time and will help you keep your poultry safe and healthy.

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).

