

# Avian influenza (bird flu) H7N8

## Information for farm workers and contractors.



**Avian influenza** can spread easily and cause death in chickens, geese, turkeys and other poultry. It rarely affects humans.

### Avian influenza at Euroa

Avian influenza was detected on a poultry farm near Euroa on February 8<sup>th</sup>. It is the H7N8 strain.

It is not the H5N1 strain which is killing wild birds, poultry and some mammals in other countries.

Avian influenza rarely affects people, but some people overseas have become infected and died from different strains after close contact with infected birds. People cannot be infected by eating cooked eggs or cooked chicken meat.

### Control of avian influenza

Agriculture Victoria aims to prevent the further spread of bird flu by euthanising the infected poultry and cleaning the sheds.

Agriculture Victoria may declare a property a:

- Suspect premises (SP) – where there is a risk of infection
- Infected premises (IP) – where infection is confirmed
- Authorised disposal site (ADS) – where birds, litters and other product can be safely disposed of.

### Working at an infected site.

Safety and wellbeing are a priority.

- **Sign in and sign out of the property** – you must record your attendance

- **Complete an induction** – the induction at each site will include hazards and infection control.
- **Supervision** – the Infected Premises Site Supervisor (IPSS) is responsible for the safety of people on site, along with staff from your company.
- **Reporting** – report all situations to the site supervisor that caused harm, or could have caused harm, to any person.

### Personal protective equipment

The protective equipment you wear depends on your job.

For any job you should wear:

- Disposable P2 respirator. Must be sealed against face.
- Disposable coveralls with hoods to cover hair as provided.
- Two pairs of nitrile gloves, one pair over the other.
- Gumboots

During your induction we will show you how to check your P2 respirator fits properly and how to correctly put on and take off your protective clothing.

Agriculture Victoria will identify lower risk areas where you can have a break to drink water.

### Broken personal protective equipment.

If there are problems with your equipment, let your supervisor and the Infected Premise Site Supervisor know.

This includes:

- If your mask is not covering your nose during high-risk tasks and pressure washing
- If your safety equipment is broken, torn or ripped and you come into contact with possibly infected material such as dead birds, manure and dust.
- If you touch your eyes, mouth, nose or mask after touching potentially possibly infected material such as dead birds, manure and dust
- If you are ill

If you have a cold, flu, gastro or feel unwell, then you should not enter the infected property, processing facility or any poultry house. This is to reduce the chance of human flu combining with avian influenza.

### **After attending an infected premises**

After attending a suspect premises, infected premises or authorised disposal site, you must not have contact with poultry and pigs

- Do not visit a commercial poultry property (more than 200 birds) or piggery for 72 hours OR
- Do not make contact for 48 hours with backyard or pet poultry or pigs. You will need to have another person provide feed and water to the animals.

Monitor for symptoms of avian influenza for 10 days after your attendance.

The reported symptoms of bird flu in humans range from typical flu-like symptoms (e.g. conjunctivitis, runny nose, sore throat, fever, gastro) through to cough; muscle aches; pneumonia, severe breathing difficulties. In rare cases death may occur.

### **If you have symptoms of avian influenza**

- Notify your supervisor
- Seek advice from your local public health unit, 1300 651 160.
- Visit your doctor as medication may be prescribed.

### **Reducing chance of infection**

Practice good hygiene when wearing safety equipment;

- avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose,
- cover any cuts or grazes with a water-resistant dressing under safety equipment (i.e. band-aid),
- do not eat or drink whilst wearing safety equipment. There will be a dedicated area to do so
- ensure safety equipment is removed safely and in the correct sequence, (seek guidance from the Site Supervisor)
- Thoroughly wash your hands and face after removing safety equipment and shower at the end of the shift at home or office, before handling other animals.

People working with poultry or on bird flu outbreak should have the seasonal flu vaccine at least two weeks before starting work.

### **Signs of bird flu in your animals**

If your animals show signs of disease immediately contact your local vet Agriculture Victoria Animal Health and Welfare staff or the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline 1800 675 888.