

Cleaning and disinfecting backyard poultry flock premises

Effective cleaning and disinfection in between poultry flocks will reduce the likelihood of spreading diseases to your new flock. Follow this four-step process (dry cleaning, washing, disinfecting and drying) before placing new birds.

1. Dry Cleaning – once all of the birds have been removed from the barn/chicken house

- a. Remove all barn equipment including feed troughs/feeders and waterers.
- b. Remove all organic material including manure, litter, feathers, blood, feed, carcasses, dust, etc. Remove nesting material from the nest boxes. Compost or burn all organic material in compliance with your municipal bylaws.
- c. Scrape and sweep all surfaces including walls, ceiling, roosts, floors, ramps, etc. If the floor is dirt, it is recommended that the top 3 cm of soil be removed and disposed of with the organic material.
- d. Remove and dispose of any leftover feed and medications that have been used for the flock in question.

2. Washing

- a. Wash building surfaces with a detergent using a pressure washer and hot water. Follow the product manufacturer's instructions. If you do not have access to a pressure washer, use a garden hose and scrub brush to remove all remaining organic material.
- b. Soak barn equipment in soapy water. Scrub to remove all organic material. Wash tools including shovels, etc.
- c. It is essential to remove as much of the remaining organic material as possible in this step.
- d. Rinse surfaces thoroughly with clean water and let the building, equipment and tools completely dry in the sun before applying disinfectant.

3. Disinfecting – follow the product manufacturer's recommendations

- a. Organic material. Disinfection will only be effective if surfaces are completely clean (none-to-minimal organic matter) as most disinfectants are inactivated when they come in contact with organic material.
- b. Concentration and contact time. Follow the product manufacturer's recommendations.
- c. Application. Apply disinfectant with a sprayer ensuring complete coverage of all surfaces of the building and equipment. Alternatively, equipment may be disinfected by submerging it in a bucket or tub.
- d. Rinse. Where recommended by manufacturer, rinse disinfectant off with clean water.

4. Drying Time

Water is critical for the survival of all living organisms, including viruses and bacteria. If the building is not dried properly, the excess moisture can result in bacteria multiplying to higher levels than seen before cleaning. Research in the poultry industry has shown that a 48-hour drying time can dramatically reduce contamination compared to 24 hours.

If possible, include a downtime (no birds in your chicken coop) of at least 3 weeks after drying, before birds are re-introduced. Consider leaving your coop empty until the next season.

In addition to cleaning and disinfecting the inside of the barn/chicken house/coop, the immediate area around the exterior of the chicken house as well as chicken run must also be cleaned and surfaces sprayed with disinfectant.

For more details on the procedures described above, please contact the Office of Alberta's Chief Provincial Veterinarian at 780-427-3448. You can call toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000.