Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Protect Grow Innovate

Buying poultry? Don’t bring home a disease!

Bringing home new birds is an exciting part of keeping poultry.

However, introducing new birds into your flock carries the risk of spreading disease. This risk increases if you buy them from a market or auction as many sellers travel long distances to these events across Western Australia.

The biosecurity steps below will reduce the risk of bringing disease home to your flock.

Carefully select new poultry

- Only buy poultry from a reputable producer or breeder who keeps healthy birds in good conditions. Check if the seller is a member of a poultry club or breed association.
- Ask the seller for written details of the flock’s health, vaccinations and medications.
- View the birds and only buy them if they are healthy.
- Healthy poultry:
  - have good body condition
  - are alert and active
  - have healthy, clean feathers
  - have clean eyes, beak, and nostrils (no discharges)
  - have a clean vent
  - breathe silently and easily
  - do not have external parasites (such as mites, lice, stickfast fleas).

Quarantine new birds

- Isolate and monitor new birds for 30 days before introducing them to your existing flock.
- Feed and clean quarantined birds last, after you have cared for other birds.
- Change clothes, clean your shoes and wash hands after caring for quarantined birds.
- Use separate equipment or clean and disinfect all equipment after use on new birds.
- Treat new birds for parasites.

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- Keep a register of all bird movements onto your premises, including where they were bought, the transporter and places they stayed during the journey to your property.

Know the signs of disease and look for external parasites

Signs of disease in new birds may appear during the quarantine period, including:

- sudden death
- lethargy or reluctance to walk, eat or drink
- droopy appearance or ruffled feathers
- head or limb swelling
- bruising of the wattle, comb, feet or skin
- respiratory (breathing) signs such as panting, nasal discharge or sneezing
- diarrhoea
- unusual head or neck posture, lack of coordination, inability to walk or stand
- unusual reduction in egg production
- look for external parasites (like mites, lice, stickfast fleas).

Report sick or dead birds immediately. Early reporting can help reduce disease spread.

Some of the signs of illness listed above may appear in birds affected by reportable bird diseases, such as avian influenza or Newcastle disease. It is a legal requirement to contact a veterinarian if you suspect poultry may have these diseases.

If you see sick or dead birds, talk to your veterinarian or call the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline** on **1800 675 888** immediately.

More information

- **H5 bird flu in Western Australia:** birdflu.wa.gov.au
- **National bird flu information:** birdflu.gov.au
- **Avian influenza in poultry:** dpird.wa.gov.au/avian-influenza
- **Newcastle disease:** dpird.wa.gov.au/newcastle_disease

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