BIOSECURITY ASSESSMENT

Erection of a 32,000 Free Range Poultry unit extension at

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

To prevent the introduction of infectious disease agents to chickens, to prevent the spread of disease agents from an infected area and to minimise the incidence and spread of microorganisms of public health significance.

Biosecurity and quarantine are integral parts of any successful poultry production system. Biosecurity refers to those measures taken to prevent or control the introduction and spread of infectious agents to a flock. Such infectious agents, whether they cause clinical or subclinical disease, significantly reduce the productivity, profitability and long-term financial viability of a poultry operation.

Biosecurity is about managing risk to meet the objectives stated above. It is essential that a risk assessment be conducted for each enterprise to establish what level of risk exists in each phase of its operations and to identify and implement control measures appropriate to these levels of risk.

This statement identifies areas of risk common to egg production farms, and appropriate measures to minimise these risks.

When undertaking the risk assessment underpinning the farm-specific biosecurity measures, it is important to take into account all factors that may impact on the biosecurity of the production area, These factors should include location and layout of the property and production area, sources of water supply, disease status of the district, proximity to other production areas with avian species, presence and type of wildlife, and interface with the organisations and/or individual clients that are being supplied. These interactions include live poultry movements, servicemen, industry personnel, contractors, deliveries of feed and disposables such as egg fillers, and movement in and out of eggs and egg products.

This statement is intended to assess the risk and measures to control the incursion of not only emergency animal diseases such as avian influenza (AI), virulent infectious bursal disease and salmonella enteritidis, but also those endemic diseases that affect productivity, performance and in some cases organisms of food safety significance.

An additional element in the prevention of introduction and spread of disease is the use of vaccination. The Manual does not cover this aspect, but the importance of an appropriate vaccination strategy is acknowledged and vaccination as a possible risk management measure should form part of the overall biosecurity risk assessment and strategy.

The purpose of the statement is to establish a minimum set of biosecurity guidelines, applicable to the individual egg producers from hatcheries to the depopulation of spent layers and the movement of eggs and egg products

2.0 DOCUMENTATION & TRAINING

To ensure awareness and training of all production area employees in all relevant biosecurity requirements

- Each production facility must keep a copy of the Biosecurity Statement readily accessible to staff

- Staff must be provided with training in the relevant parts of the Biosecurity Statement and such training is to be recorded.

3. FACILITY OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

To limit and control access to poultry production areas by vehicles and people, and prevent as much as possible access by livestock, wild birds and other animals (including rodents).

The production area must have a perimeter fence establishing a clearly defined biosecurity zone.

If livestock graze the property, then the production area must have a stock proof fence. Grazing near sheds (i.e. on part of the production area) is only permitted where the grazing area is separated by a stock proof barrier from the area used by poultry, effectively preventing transmission of contaminants from grazing livestock to poultry, and the grazing area is not used for access to other parts of the production area. Drainage from livestock pastures or holding areas must not enter poultry enclosures or areas that can be accessed by poultry (e.g. through fences).

A sketch or map of the layout of the property, showing the production area, sheds, ranges, access roads and gates must be created and maintained and kept current. This must be readily accessible to all staff and visitors.

The main entrance to the production area must be capable of being closed off to vehicle traffic (e.g. lockable gate which, where feasible, should be kept locked at all times) and must display appropriate signage including “Biosecure Area. No Entry Unless Authorised” or similar wording. In addition, signage must direct visitors to contact the producer before proceeding i.e. telephone number and/or enquire at house.

There must be a parking area for vehicles not entering the production area. There must be a change area away from sheds with clean protective clothing and boots provided. Showering and changing into clean protective farm clothing is preferable, particularly for pullets that are susceptible to endemic poultry diseases.

Entry to sheds must only be made through entrances where a footbath exists containing a suitable disinfectant used in accordance with company or manufacturer’s instructions and changed regularly before the disinfectant deteriorates and loses effectiveness. There must be provision for scraping the soles of boots before dipping to ensure sanitiser is making contact with the soles of the boots. Facilities for hand washing/sanitation must also be placed at the entry of each shed. While footbaths provide a degree of security in regard to the incursion of pathogens into the production it is preferable to have the policy that requires a change of footwear at the boundary of the shed/range area. Each shed/production facility should have its own footwear to change into.

Dead bird storage and disposal methods must confirm to applicable hygienic containment and environmental compliance requirements.

All poultry housing must be designed and maintained so as to prevent the entry of wild birds and limit the access of vermin as far as is practical. The control of wild birds has limitations in free-range operations.

Free-range landscapes – trees, shrubs and other range amenities should be selected to minimise the risk of attracting the types of wild birds that are high biosecurity risk. The area around sheds must be kept free from debris and vegetation, and should be mown regularly to discourage wild birds, insects and rodents which are potential disease vectors.

Vegetation buffer for environmental compliance should not be compromised. Trees may be used as shelter belts, along fence lines and to provide shade and some protection from unfavourable ambient conditions and flying predators.

The production area should be adequately drained to prevent accumulation and stagnation of water likely to attract waterfowl, especially in the areas around sheds and range areas. Standing water may also increase the presence f insects which can act as significant disease vectors. A range management plan should be implemented to mange pot-holes or water pooling after heavy rain falls.

An appropriate vermin control strategy and plan must be developed and implemented, including rodents, foxes etc.

A baiting program for rodents must be implemented where a risk assessment deems this necessary (live rodents, droppings, nests).

Drinking water for poultry must meet appropriate water standards. Water that does not meet the standard must be effectively treated and sanitised for being used as drinking, cleaning or cooling water for poultry. Treated and sanitised water supply must be kept in a closed system from the point of treatment to its time of utilisation for drinking water.

Only laying fowl are to be kept in the production area and no other avian species (including aviary birds and pet birds).

Feeding systems must, wherever possible, be closed to ensure that feed in silos and feed delivery systems are protected from access and contamination by wild birds and rodents. Feed spills outside the shed must be cleaned up without delay to prevent the attraction of wild birds and vermin.

Where bird weighing is practised, it must be carried out using the production area's own weighing frames and scales. Company service personnel can use their own scales provided that they are cleaned and disinfected when moved between production areas.

Personnel Standards & Procedures

To minimise the risk of introducing or spreading a disease or contaminant through vehicle and/or people movement.

Production Personnel

To minimise the risk of introduction of disease or contaminants by production personnel.

Production area personnel or any person residing on the holding must not have contact or dealings with any other poultry wile actively engaged with working in the production area.

Production area personnel must wear laundered clean clothes each day at the commencement of their work or wear on-farm clothing and footwear after showering.

Production area personnel should not move between various operational areas including production and/or grading facilities without first considering the biosecurity risks.

Personnel movements should always be from clean to dirty sites and not the reverse.

Company Service Personnel

To minimise the eish of introduction of disease or contaminants by company service personnel.

Company service personnel may by necessity make multiple production area visits on a single sat. Sire specific protective clothing and footwear should be worn in the production area.

Visits should always be made from 'clean' areas, i.e. home, pullets (younger to older) or sited of known endemic disease- free status first. Where necessary, visits may be made from production areas with lower known endemic disease status after a shower and complete change of clothing.

Repair & Maintenance

To minimise the risk of introduction of disease or contaminants by contractors carrying out maintenance and repair work.

Repair and maintenance contractors who have had contact with poultry or other birds that day must not enter sheds and/or ranges populated or ready to be populated with birds unless (a) it is an emergency and (b) they have showered and changed clothes and boots, wear a hair covering, and as per the facility biosecurity policy.

Routine maintenance should be conducted, where possible, between batches prior to final disinfection where a dingle ae batch system is practised.

Tools taken into the production area must be cleaned free of dust and organic matter and be decontaminated before entry into sheds.

Contractors, Suppliers, other Service Personnel and Visitors

To minimise the risk of introduction of disease or contaminants by contractors, suppliers, service personnel and visitors.

Conditions of entry to the poultry shed and poultry ranges- all visitors must agree to comply with the following entry conditions.:

- All visitors must wear protective clothing provided
- All visitors must wear protective boots
- All visitors must disinfect boots in footbath provided on entering production area/sheds or change into a separate pair of shed boots
- All visitors must sanitise hands before entering sheds

- Visitors who keep poultry, aged birds or pigs prohibited from entry without approval from management. A 48-hour period since contact with poultry and birds shall apply and entry ill only occur after a shower and change into clean clothing and footwear.
- Visitors who have been in contact with any avian species or untreated poultry manure is prohibited from entry without approval from management. A 48-hour period since contact with poultry and birds shall apply

The entry unit conditions are to be detailed on signage which will be displayed prominently near the Visitor's Log. All visits must be approved by the manager before visitors may enter sheds and ranges.

A record must be kept of all visitors to the poultry sheds and poultry ranges including contactors and company personnel (visitors log). All visitors must sign in and out (this tracks people and minimises a welfare incursion).

Any authorised visitor (including neighbours, friends, other producers or equipment suppliers) likely to have been exposed that day to poultry, other commercial poultry or aviaries, egg handling /poultry processing establishments or pigs must enter the sheds unless they have had a shower and changed clothes and boots or must limit their visit to the property's residence while wearing clean clothes. A stand down period of 24 to 48 hours is always the preferred option of visitors prior to showering and/or entering the production area in clean clothing and footwear.

All visitors should park their vehicles outside the production area unless it is essential that the vehicle be taken on sire (e.g. some maintenance contractors). Where vehicular entry is necessary the history of the movements of the vehicle should be interrogated and preferable the vehicle should be washed and disinfected at the entry point. It is important that the potential internal contamination of the vehicle, especially driver footwells, is always considered. Non-essential vehicles should be parked in a preferably harrier secured area at least 20 meters from the production area.

Requirements for Specified Movements

To minimise the risk of introduction of disease or contaminants by specified movements.

Poultry pick-up crews should only transfer one single age pullet flock in ant one day from any particular production area. Similarly, pick-up crews after depopulating spent layer hens should not handle pullers for transfer on the same day.

Pick-up crews must not keep birds at their home and be trained in the fundamentals of biosecurity and welfare. Pick-up vehicles, modules and crates should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between farms.

A thorough inspection of the vehicle and trailer should be undertaken prior entry on the farm and the movements of the driver and drew validated.

Prior communications should ensure that there is a clear understanding by the contractor of their biosecurity responsibilities and policies of the poultry farm operator.

Poultry delivery trucks, dollies and chick boxes must be cleaned and disinfected each day and between properties. Drivers must wear clean protective clothing and footwear prior to each delivery and hands must be sanitised.

Trucks carrying new litter should be from reputable companies and not used for carting used litter and manure. Trucks carrying manure and used litter should not be used for back loading grain without a prior thorough cleaning program and the knowledge of all parties involved.

Other deliveries (e.g. gas and feed) drivers must not enter sheds; must wear protective clothing and boots; and confine their movements to the immediate vicinity of the truck and trailer. External feed suppliers should be certified and have internal biosecurity and hygiene policies which are accessible to the poultry producer.

There must be a system for tracing movements of delivery personnel (e.g. through delivery dockets and feed company records).

Entry Procedures for Poultry Sheds and Ranges

To prevent the introduction of disease agents and contaminants entering into bird sheds and ranges through people movement.

Any person entering sheds must sanitise their hands and use footbaths (unless separate shed specific boots are being used) before entering each shed.

Soles of boots must be scraped before disinfecting in the footbaths.

A hand sanitiser must be available at all shed entrances and must be used before entering.

Facilities should be available for the cleaning and disinfection of equipment before entry.

The policy of having a change of footwear and coveralls to put over clothing at the shed entrance is the preferred policy for moving between like sheds and minimally impedes the flexibility of staff movements.

Persons who have been in previous sheds that may, through positive endemic disease status, compromise the birds in another shed should only enter after showering and changing into farm based clothing, This is typically the policy requirement for moving from production areas of the farm to rearing and pullet facilities.

4. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Water Supply

To ensure that water used in poultry sheds for drinking and cleaning, is of a standard suitable for livestock

The use of a quality water supply free of potential avian pathogens is critical to achieving good biosecurity. Effective treatment of surface water to reduce contamination and eliminate avian disease agents is essential but can be technically difficult and any water treatment process should be monitored regularly. Water with a high level of organic matter, or low or high pH, cannot be effectively sanitised (chlorinated) without having the appropriate pre-treatment.

Ultraviolet treatment of water is limited to low flow rate clean water with no turbidity. It may be necessary to seek expert advice to ensure a safe water supply.

The effectiveness of water treatment systems, including alternative systems (e.g. ultraviolet), must be validated before use and treatment systems require a program of maintenance and monitoring to ensure effectiveness. Production area records able to demonstrate the effectiveness of water treatment must be kept. Microbiological validation of the efficiency of the treatment system must be carried out at least twice a year.

Drinking water quality must be maintained at a standard suitable for use in livestock.

Testing must be conducted and recorded daily, and a maintenance program needs to be in place.

Vermin Baiting

To minimise the potential for introduction of infectious agents and pathogens by vermin, in particular rodents, through their presence in the production area.

Bait stations must be placed at regular intervals around the sheds. The number of bait stations should be increased in areas where there are signs of increased rodent activity.

Bait stations must be numbered and a map kept of their location.

Bait stations must be checked weekly and fresh baits laid as required.

A record should be kept of each inspection and any activity noted.

Bait stations should be secure and tamperproof.

Bait stations must be designed to minimise the opportunity for other mammals, native wildlife and birds to access the bait.

Other procedures like trapping and sonic sound aversion systems may also assist in rodent control.

Cleaning, Ground, and Amenities Maintenance

To hinder the introduction of disease agents and contaminants into poultry shed and enclosures and reduce the attraction of rodents and wild birds to production areas.

Feed spills must be cleaned up as soon as practicable. Feed attracts birds and rodents to the production area.

Grass on and around the production area must be kept cut – long grass attracts rodents and favours the survival of viruses and bacteria.

Footbaths must be inspected daily (e.g. for excessive organic matter) and the contents replaced as required to achieve an adequate concentration of suitable disinfectant used according to company or manufacturer's recommendations.

The free-range area must be adequately drained to prevent accumulation and stagnation of water. They must also be contoured to limit the ingress of runoff water from other parts of the property.

The use of manure or litter on adjoining land to the free range areas from other parts of the poultry operation should take into account the spread of potential endemic disease agents like salmonella and the introduction of litter beetles.

Record Keeping

To assist early detection of animal health issues and the response to any biosecurity breach.

Bird mortality, feed and water consumption and production data must all be recorded daily to assist monitoring for any unusual animal health problems potentially indicating a biosecurity breach.

A record of bird movements must be maintained to facilitate tracing in case of an animal health or food safety concern.

A batch summary sheet which identifies all the treatments and monitoring of procedures and outcomes for each batch of pullets should be completed and made available to the production farm prior to the bird transfer. This is so corrective actions can be undertaken like revaccination where serological evidence indicates this is required or where a contingency is required for a health status change such as with salmonella.

5. INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES (INNS)

Non-Native Species (INNS) are any animal or plant introduced (deliberately or accidentally) by human activity to an area in which they do not naturally occur.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), sometimes referred to as “invasive alien species”, are those non-native species that have the ability to spread rapidly and become dominant in an area or ecosystem, causing adverse ecological, environmental and economic impacts.

Pre-Construction Considerations

- Detailed checks and risk assessments will be carried out for non-native species within the site feasibility assessments and surveys
- Where any non-native species are present, an extensive understanding and knowledge of the risks and implications of managing it, as well as legal requirements shall be attained.
- Where a non-native species is identified as a risk of being introduced, spread within, or moved off site, full mitigation measures will be considered at the early planning stage to ensure enough time is given to implement them
- Non-native species and locations (mapped) are incorporated, within all relevant site method statements.
- Where a species requires long-term management (e.g. Japanese Knotwood), a site management plan will be commissioned that addresses all issues associated with it

Biosecurity Considerations on site

- All contractors are to be fully briefed as to what potential invasive no native species look like and the issues associated with it (toolbox presentation)
- Everybody working on site must understand the role and authority of the employee managing the issue for any non-native species
- Any areas of the site that are contaminated/infested with non-native species will be recorded within the site method statements
- Any areas of the site that are contaminated/infested with non-native species will be isolated with fencing and restricted access signs erected.

Use and Movement of Soil & Water

The introduction of a non-native species both onto and off a site is most likely to happen in the following ways:

Contaminated Topsoil

If soil has been treated for and is free from Japanese Knotweed it can be re-used on sire without the need for a waste management licence or an exemption. If taken off sire, this material must be disposed of in a licenced landfill. Reuse of treated soils is at the contractor's own risk and should be only reused in a restricted area, rather than spread across the site. This should be recorded in an ongoing management plan and inspected/treated accordingly.

Contamination of Vehicles or Machinery

Where non-native species are known to be within or close to the site, care must be taken so as not to facilitate the transportation of plant seeds or fragments, animals or eggs on machinery, vehicles or by foot, from one site/river catchment to another. This may require the need for an exclusion zone and/or the use of designated machinery/equipment on key sites to prevent movement from one site or river catchment to another.

Vehicles should be inspected before moving them from site to site or off site and wash facilities provided suitable for the machinery e.g. drive through bath or footbaths. Attention to caterpillar tracks and where trucks and dumpers are stowed.

To maintain good site hygiene when dealing with any non-native species the following equipment/machinery guidelines will be implemented;

- A fence that can be clearly seen should mark out the area of issue. Signs should be erected to warn people working there that the area is infested/contaminated
- Where contaminated soil, materials or water are located, signage should be erected to indicate the,
- Personnel working on or between sites should ensure their clothing and footwear are cleaned where appropriate to prevent spread
- Tracked vehicles should not be used within the area of infestation

- All vehicles leaving the infested area and/or transporting infested soil/materials must be thoroughly pressure-washed in a designated wash-down area before being used for other work
- Where cross-contamination is possible (i.e. from one site to another), consider designating vehicles or machinery to specific sites where possible to prevent spread
- Material/water left after vehicles have been pressure-washed must be contained, collected and disposed of appropriately
- All chemicals used for the control of non-native species should be stored and used in a responsible manner
- All wash facilities including wastewater from washing vehicles, equipment or personnel should be managed in a responsible way so as not to cause harm to the environment

Use of Water and/or Crossing of Water

Water used for construction purposes or to wash vehicles or equipment, must be from a source of water will not inadvertently act as a vector for the transportation of non-native species to/from your site or elsewhere.

Storage of any surface or ground water on your site for any reason must gain appropriate authorisation from SEPA. Disposal of contaminated wash water, including all silt and other solids (e.g. plant fragments), must also be dealt with in a responsible manner to avoid pollution and to prevent the spread of any non-native species that may be present.