

DUCK STANDARDS

WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY

VERSION 5.1



The outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in November 2021 has almost certainly been the worst outbreak of the disease in living memory. The impact of this outbreak across the entire poultry industry gave rise to businesses, farmers, industry bodies and government undertaking a wholesale review of biosecurity practises, which in turn precipitated most of the changes presented here for version 5.1. The majority of new and revised standards are largely contained within the biosecurity section, but there are also changes to the housing and shelter section too. These changes can be broadly broken down into three areas:

- improved control of contamination from within the general biosecure area
- reducing the risk from vectors of disease
- and strengthening existing standards

These changes will apply from 1st October 2022.

These updates have been approved by our Technical Advisory Committee of farmers and industry experts, and Sector Board. Find out about the main changes and why we made them in the summary below. The checklist at the end of this document covers all changes and everything a member needs to do differently from October.

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DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Red Tractor's reputation is built on traceable, safe food production that has been farmed with care. Maintaining our reputation is crucial to everyone.

DP.5

This new standard is to verify that farms hold the correct environmental permit where required. Many Red Tractor poultry units have their Environmental Permitting audits done during the same visit as their Red Tractor assessment and this new standard requires no additional action for members. You simply need to ensure that your permit details, if applicable, are available at your next Red Tractor audit. Verification that a permit is held where necessary is important for ensuring compliance with environmental legislation on Red Tractor poultry units.

HOUSING, SHELTER AND HANDLING FACILITIES

The aim for Red Tractor is that all birds have safe, comfortable and hygienic housing.

HF.4.f

Litter stores aren't necessarily emptied at the end of each flock cycle, and so litter stores do not naturally fit into the end of flock cycle cleaning and disinfection. It's important for the control of pathogens and rodents to ensure that when stores are emptied that they are cleaned and disinfected. You should add a clause relating to this into your farm cleaning and disinfection policy, if not already in place. The details for your written cleaning and disinfection policy is found under HF.4.

HF.4.g

This new audit point acknowledges that free range must operate a commensurate policy of cleaning and disinfecting areas of the farm that do not sit within the general cleaning and disinfection policy, between flock cycles. Expectation of range management is a clean down of the apron/hard standing outside pot holes, managing poaching and puddles.

HF.4.h

This new audit point recognises that hatcheries should, and do, have written cleaning and disinfecting policies in place to manage hygiene and disease transmission.

HF.4.4

This new suite of standards and audit points will strengthen biosecurity within the duck sector. It acknowledges the risk of contamination from rodents and wild birds from straw stored in the open. Therefore duck scheme members will now have to store any straw that is not under cover in-line with the standards for other poultry species, (on pallets and covered) and ensure that damaged or wet straw is not used for bedding up birds.

HF.4.9

A non-timebound recommendation has been included which asks that all bales are stored in buildings which do not allow for the ingress of wild birds or rodents. Defra have identified that bales stored in the open present more risk from contamination by wild birds than those stored undercover. Many sites will not have the ability to build or dedicate space to a bale store. This standard recognises that it is important to implement where possible as it offers the best opportunity to minimise risk from avian influenza when used in conjunction with excellent biosecurity practices. This is a non-timebound recommendation so there is no obligation to meet it.

BIOSECURITY AND DISEASE CONTROL

Effective biosecurity measures are essential to prevent the spread of disease and protect food safety and bird health. We are providing extra clarity in this area to strengthen biosecurity.

BI.1.b

The policy has been updated to include 'staff' within the areas of risk that have to be assessed as a way to control and minimise the spread of disease on - and in the case of staff – particularly between sites. Ensure that your policy is updated to reflect how you manage the risk of non-site specific staff coming onto site. This is especially relevant where staff are shared between sites through necessity, but equally thought should be given to company staff who travel between sites.

BI.1.d

It's important that the biosecurity policy is up to date and relevant to the challenges faced by the site. Ensure that there is a process in place for you to review the biosecurity policy annually, and that where necessary, changes take into account any biosecurity issues faced on the site within the prior 12 months.

BI.1.i

It is important that the entrance to the farm site prevents accidental vehicle access. This can be achieved in a number of ways, depending on the set up of your site. Sites can use secure gates, but where there aren't the permissions to do this (i.e. shared entrances, tenanted land, etc.) members can choose to use a non-permanent structure such as a chain, or cones, etc. The site doesn't have to be locked, but it must prevent vehicles from being able to drive directly on to the site.

BI.2.a

There are some amendments to the visitor book requirements. This includes adding where necessary, the site name for visitors last poultry contact within the last 7 days if visited in the UK, or 14 days if overseas. This allows effective trace for any outbreaks as the last-named site can be traced – and so on. It's also really important to emphasise that all visitors include anyone who doesn't specifically work at that site.

BI.3.b

Ensuring that biosecurity maps are comprehensive helps sites manage their biosecurity protocols. This standard has been strengthened to ensure that all farm areas are comprehensively captured. Ensure that the farm site and staff offices are included in your biosecurity maps, if not already in place. Free range members should also include the range associated with each house.

Bl.4.g

Whilst standards have always required loading areas to be hygienically managed, there is now a better definition of that explanation, i.e. loading areas must be cleaned daily, as vehicles enter the sheds on a daily basis to bed up, and therefore contamination the loading area must be appropriately managed.

Bl.6.h

It's important that foot dips are covered to ensure that they are not diluted by rain, or contaminated by dirt.

Bl.6.e/
Bl.6.f/
Bl.6.g

There is recognition from all stakeholders that changing footwear between the general and bird biosecure areas significantly reduces the risk of pathogen transmission. Barriers are proven to ensure that the appropriate behaviours are carried out, i.e. removing outdoor footwear and using dedicated house footwear, or using new overshoes. The parameters set in the standards for using barriers have been proven in both the chicken and turkey schemes.

Bl.6.i

The movement of any items between sheds increases the risk of disease transmission and contamination from outside. The standards already reflect this in terms of footwear, but it's important that opportunities for reducing risk are not missed. Therefore any reusable equipment (i.e. from tractors to buckets) must be managed if being used between sheds. The audit points ensure that everything being taken into the shed is clean and disinfected. This helps reduced the incidence of disease on farm.

Bl.6.i.a

It's best to have house dedicated items such as buckets to reduce the risk of contamination between sheds. Where equipment is shared between sheds it must be cleaned and disinfected between sheds. This includes wheelbarrows, shovels, buckets, trolleys, euthanasia equipment, etc.

Bl.6.i.b

Where houses are bedded up using a tractor, the tractor should have its wheels disinfected between sheds. The loading areas should already be being hygienically managed (Bl.4.g).

Bl.7.i

Defra and APHA have identified that buildings in poor repair provide more opportunities for contamination, either through rodent ingress, or pathogens that have accumulated on the outside, i.e. on the roof, being washed into the shed through any gaps when it rains. It's therefore vitally important to ensure that buildings are in a good state of repair.

Bl.7.i.a

To ensure that this standard can be met, buildings must be inspected at each turn around. This standard is a direct learning from best practice in the industry where end of cycle checklists ensure that buildings are inspected to ensure that they are sound and secure. Members with Environmental Permits will already be required to do this regularly.

Bl.7.i.b

Ensure that the building does not have any leaks that allow for the ingress of rainwater, or for rodents.

BI.8.a

Adopting best practice from the chicken industry, duck grower and free range members will need to ensure sites operate as all-in/all-out. Single age sites have been shown to reduce the risk of cross contamination between houses on site. Where a site has more than one age between houses, members will need to demonstrate how these operate as single age sites within the same farm site.

BI.8.2/
BI.8.2.a

Adopting best practice from the chicken industry, duck members must ensure that once placed, birds are not moved between buildings. This does not cover where birds are moving from rear to lay, or brood to free range.

BI.8.3

Adopting best practice from the chicken industry, duck members must ensure that, on a house-by-house basis, turn arounds between flocks must be no fewer than five calendar days (inclusive). Turn around times are implicated in the control of pathogens that present a health risk to birds. Evidence has shown that adequate turn around times improve health on farm. Although many members operate to much higher turn around times, five days is considered the minimum in which houses can be washed, cleaned, disinfected, dried out, swabbed to ensure cleaning and disinfection was effective before houses are re-bedded.

BI.13.a

APHA are requiring many sites affected by the most recent HPAI outbreak to net any natural ventilation with a gauge of 25mm or less of mesh. This is in recognition of the disease challenge presented by wild birds. It's important that this is reflected in the standards, and many members have already decided to mitigate the risk by installing netting already.

CHECKLIST

GF Grower

BL Breeder Layers

BR Breeder Replacement

FR Free Range

H Hatchery

DP.5	GF, BL, BR, FR	Does the farm have their environmental permit details available for audit?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.4.f	GF, FR, BR, BL	Are the litter stores cleaned and disinfected whenever they are empty, and has a clause been added relating to this in your farm cleaning and disinfection policy, if not already in place?	Yes	No	
HF.4.g	FR	For free range members only, has the cleaning and disinfection of non bird biosecure areas been added to the cleaning and disinfection policy?	Yes	No	
HF.4.h	H	For hatcheries, is there a written cleaning and disinfection policy in place?	Yes	No	
HF.4.9	GR, FR, BR, BL	Do you have a dedicated bale store that does not allow for the ingress of wild birds or rodents? This a recommendation only. Criteria to meet this standard requires that open sides are netted with a gauge of 25mm or less, and that buildings used for bale storage are reflected in the site survey for rodent control.	Yes	No	N/A
HF.4.4	GF, FR, BR, BL	Is straw stored undercover, stored on pallets and not in contact with the ground? Does any cover on the straw protect the straw from contamination from birds and rodents? When retrieving straw to bed up ducks, is it not wet or damaged?	Yes	No	
BI.1.b	GF, BR, BL, FR, H	Is your policy updated to reflect how you manage the risk of non-site specific staff coming onto site, especially any staff shared between sites?	Yes	No	
BI.1.d	GF, BR, BL, FR, H	Is there a process in place for you to review the biosecurity policy annually, and does the review take into account any biosecurity issues faced on the site within the prior 12 months?	Yes	No	
BI.1.i	GR, FR, BR, BL	Does the entrance to the farm site prevent vehicles from being able to accidentally drive onto the site?	Yes	No	
BI.2.a	GF, FR, BL, BR, H	Have all non site specific staff signed the visitors book and included the site name of their last poultry contact within 7 days (UK) or 14 days (if visited overseas)?	Yes	No	
BI.3.b	GF, FR, BL, BR, H	Are the farm site and staff offices included in your biosecurity maps? For free range members, have you included the range associated with each house?	Yes	No	

BI.4.g	GF, FR, BL, BR, H	Are loading areas cleaned daily prior to birds being bedded up to reduce the risk of contamination being brought into bird housing?	Yes	No	
BI.6.h	GF, FR, BL, BR, H	Are all outdoor foot dips properly covered?	Yes	No	
BI.6.e	GF, FR, BL, BR	Is there a physical barrier in place at the entrance to each bird biosecure area?	Yes	No	
BI.6.f	GF, FR, BL, BR	Is the barrier being used to ensure that dedicated footwear is being used inside sheds?	Yes	No	
BI.6.g	GF, FR, BL, BR	Can the barrier be cleaned, or if fixed does it have adequate drainage? Does the barrier provide a seated area to facilitate the changing of shoes from general to bird biosecure areas?	Yes	No	
BI.6.i	GF, FR, BL, BR	Do you have facilities in place to either have equipment that you use every day dedicated to each house on site, or do you have the facilities to clean and disinfect reusable items at the point of bringing them into the shed? Does this include disinfecting tractor wheels between sheds whilst bedding up?	Yes	No	
BI.7.i	GF, FR, BL, BR	Do you have a maintenance log for each house and does it demonstrate that you are recording when checks were done and any issues found along with how and when it was corrected?	Yes	No	
BI.8.a	GF, FR	If grower members have more than one age of bird on site have they taken the necessary actions (biosecurity mapping) to demonstrate how they can operate house or houses of birds of the same age as distinct biosecurity zones?	Yes	No	N/A
BI.8.3	GF, FR, BL, BR	Does the planning for your site accommodate a 5 day turn around by house?	Yes	No	
BI.13.a	GF, FR, BL, BR, H	Is all bird housing with natural ventilation netted with a mesh that has a gauge of 25mm or less?	Yes	No	N/A