

Strict biosecurity recommended as winter brings renewed risk of bird flu outbreak

Following the culling of more than four million birds and containment efforts that cost the poultry industry R954m, bird flu was thought to be largely under control. Reports last month of new cases on farms in the North West province and among seabirds along the Western Cape coastline, however, sparked fears that the bird flu epidemic might flare up again.



Poultry farmers urged to watch out for avian flu

Bekezela Phakathi 27 Mar 2018



Winter brings the renewed risk of the disease being spread by migrating wild birds, a factor which has prompted the South African Poultry Association (SAPA) to say that it is bracing itself for another outbreak. The organisation recommends strict biosecurity and farm management protocols to help decrease the chance of disease on farms.

Ensuring adequate hygiene standards

“Aside from isolation, traffic control, pest control and dead bird disposal, cleaning and disinfecting is a fundamental aspect of biosecurity in commercial poultry production,” says Emma Corder, country manager of Nilfisk South Africa. “Farmers are advised to work closely with cleaning industry experts to ensure their hygiene standards adequately address risks.”



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According to the SAPA guidelines on the application of biosecurity on poultry farms, cleaning processes must ensure that workers that come into contact with birds must have clean hands and clothes, to mitigate against the potential for new contaminants being introduced from outside the immediate environment of the farm.

To avoid cross-contamination, hands and boots should be disinfected regularly, before entering each new birdhouse. Equipment used inside the poultry houses should also be cleaned and disinfected prior to entering and after exiting the houses. Equipment should also never be shared between farms unless it has been thoroughly disinfected.

Modern cleaning technologies can effectively clean and disinfect facilities and environments on a farm.

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