

Avian Flu



Bird Flu season usually starts anytime from November onwards and happens to a varying extent most years. When setting up with chickens simply organise a compliant run and when 'lockdown' occurs there will be no issues. Most of the things we have to adhere to are good general practice & worth carrying out whether restrictions are in place or not.

Things to Prepare	Why	Mitigation
<p>Ensure you have a large enough run that your hens can stay in overwinter.</p> <p>The run will need at least a fine mesh roof or better still a tarpaulin cover or solid roof.</p>	<p>When the hens are confined they will become bored if they don't have enough space.</p> <p>Wild birds must not be able to access the run. If they share food or water with your hens this can be how Avian Flu is transferred.</p> <p>A solid roof will prevent wild bird droppings getting into the run.</p>	
<p>Ensure the run has a thick layer of woodchips over a base such as turf protector or rubber mud mats</p>	<p>This will prevent a muddy run and help keep the hens keep busy whilst they are confined as they can dig through the woodchips. Regularly use a ground sanitising powder on the woodchips.</p>	
<p>Always use a footbath with a Defra compliant disinfectant before entering the run and avoid entering the run unless necessary.</p>	<p>Avian Flu can be transferred on footwear.</p>	
<p>Keep on top of vermin</p>	<p>Vermin can also carry Avian Flu into the hen enclosure as well as other diseases.</p>	
<p>Keep your hens busy and entertained whilst they are confined to their run.</p>	<p>If they normally free range they may be bored and frustrated at not being allowed out. Hang up treats, alfalfa blocks, cabbages etc to keep them entertained.</p> <p>Consider feeding mash instead of pellets as it takes longer to eat.</p> <p>Scatter some feed or live mealworms into their woodchips, they can scratch and dig to find them.</p>	