



Contamination Prevention

Recommended Practices for Cleaning and Decontamination of Avian Influenza

What is Avian Influenza?

Avian Influenza, also known as Bird Flu, is an acute infection of poultry caused by type A Influenza virus from *Orthomyxoviridae* family. The virus is highly contagious and fatal having respiratory, peptic and nervous symptoms. In flocks where infection is seen, the death rate can be up to 100%.

The Avian Influenza agent is an enveloped virus of RNA character. It is sensitive to certain disinfectants, temperature (>70°C), environmental conditions, low and high pH and drying. The virus remains viable for extended periods in tissues, faeces and water, especially in cold and humid environments. However, as the outer wall of the virus is enclosed within a lipid-containing membrane, this virus can easily be inactivated and stabilized, for example with chemical disinfectants or ultraviolet light.

Bird Flu Transmission

The Avian Influenza virus is transmitted in nasal secretions and faeces from infected birds and can remain viable for about five weeks under poultry house conditions. For this reason, one of the most important issues regarding infection control is manure. The virus can remain viable for longer periods under the high humidity and low temperature of faeces. The virus can survive up to 3 months in the tissues and faeces of infected birds. In water, the virus can survive for up to 4 days at 22 °C and more than 30 days at 0 °C.

Migratory birds play a primary role in the transmission and introduction of Avian Influenza into flocks. However, feed, water, equipment and personnel contaminated with faeces or secretions of infected birds or by broken eggs are also a serious cause of the spread of infection. These factors can introduce, as well as spread, the infection within a farm and also to other farms.

Horizontal contagion (from bird to bird) is the most common mode of viral transmission within flocks. There is no concrete evidence regarding Vertical contagion (from bird to chick via egg) but broken eggs contaminated on the shell may infect chicks in the incubator.

