

REMEMBER...

Healthy flocks are *more productive*, and consumers pay more for high quality eggs and chicks.

- Best management practices keep flocks healthy and increase productivity and profitability.
- Good sanitation is the best way to keep birds healthy and protect them and hatcheries from diseases and parasites.
- Healthy hens lay more high-quality eggs, and better eggs mean more chicks will hatch and survive.
- Good sanitation also prevents diseases and parasites from endangering human health.
- If your poultry farm smells, your management stinks!

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Association of Avian Veterinarians
<http://www.aav.org/>

Live Poultry Sales - MDA Animal Health
410-841-5810

Maryland Extension - Poultry
410-742-1178 ext. 309 or 410-758-0166
www.extension.umd.edu/poultry

Report Sick Birds to MDA at 410-841-5810

Photos by Will Morrow

Other Resources to keep you informed...

See the **USDA National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Best Management Practices Handbook**, USDA, March 2014. Online at: www.poultryimprovement.org/documents/BestManagementPracticesHatcheries.pdf

Contact your local **Cooperative Extension Office** for information about improving flock management and productivity as well as ways to improve egg cleaning and candling, incubator and hatchery operations for optimum hatchability and livability of chicks. Find your Extension Office here: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations>

Hatchery Management Guide for Game Bird and Small Poultry Flock Owners, Mississippi State University Cooperative Extension Service, August 2014. See: <http://msucares.com/poultry/reproductions/hatchmgt.htm>

**Report Sick Birds to MDA
at 410-841-5810
(after hours 410-841-5971)**



Maryland Department of Agriculture
ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAM
50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis MD 21401
410-841-5810
animalhealth.mda@maryland.gov
www.mda.maryland.gov/animalhealth

Best Management Practices for

Your Small Poultry Hatchery

Do you sell chicks in Maryland?
Do you produce and sell hatching
eggs in Maryland?
Do you sell chicks or hatching
eggs out of state?



*Here are some
ways to keep your
breeder flocks
productive, your chicks
healthy and your
business profitable!*



Maryland Department of Agriculture
ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAM

An *ounce* of prevention is better than a *pound* of cure

Preventing diseases from entering and spreading in poultry flocks and hatcheries is much easier than eliminating them. Diseases cost you money by reducing egg production, hatchability and can kill chicks. Some poultry diseases, such as Salmonella and Avian Influenza, can also infect, sicken and even kill people as well, especially the most vulnerable – children and the elderly.



Start with birds that are *healthy*

Buy your breeders from hatcheries that are certified by the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). These hatcheries have undergone rigorous inspections and their chickens are certified to be free of major poultry diseases and common parasites, ensuring a good basis to produce disease free eggs and chicks.

- Ensure birds coming into your farm are disease and parasite free by keeping them separated from your established flock for at least 21 days. Don't put "show" birds back into their old flock!
- Even after 21 days, do not mix birds; keep each flock separate, preferably by hatch date.
- If any birds get sick, isolate them from the others immediately!
- If many birds are sick, call MDA immediately at 410-841-5810 for help and diagnosis.
- Register all your flocks with MDA. It's the law! If a disease outbreak occurs in your area, we'll contact you with information. Register here: www.mda.maryland.gov/AnimalHealth/Pages/poultry.aspx

It is MANDATORY when operating a hatchery in Maryland to be certified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Sanitation first, last and *always*

Even before the breeder chicks arrive, clean facilities with water, detergent, and elbow grease – then disinfect. But don't rely on disinfectants alone! They cannot replace poor cleaning. It is impossible to disinfect a dirty environment.

- Clean production and handling facilities, incubators, hatcheries and brooders after every hatch. Don't forget to clean hatchery walls and floors as well.
- Handle hatching eggs correctly! Egg shells are not a barrier to disease. Disease can easily penetrate shells and lead to weak or sick chicks. Learn how to properly clean dirty eggs and egg containers, store eggs properly, and keep hatchery facilities sanitary.
- Discourage unwelcome visitors from entering your poultry farm. Have signs and disinfectant baths to protect "clean" areas, especially poultry yards, brooders, hatcheries and egg rooms.
- Keep rodents, wild birds, animals and insects away from the flock to prevent the introduction of diseases.
- Inspect chicks to ensure only the healthiest leave your farm; consumers pay more for quality, and become loyal customers and advertisers.

Call MDA Headquarters (410-841-5810) for the **MDA Approval to Sell Application** to initiate a free annual inspection. MDA Certified Poultry Testing Agents can test your breeders* during the year for a "clean" flock status. Call the MDA Headquarters to get a list of MD Certified Poultry Testing Agents in your area. MDA Field Inspectors will conduct the annual hatchery inspection,

and may conduct testing to assist the hatchery operator in participating in either NPIP or the Maryland State Poultry Certification programs for small flock holders. Annual hatchery inspections begin in the clean rooms and proceed to the dirty areas (in this order: egg storage, incubator, hatcher egg/tray washing, chick brooder, hatchery office). Our inspectors will assure that there is sanitary disposal of hatchery residue like chick down, infertile eggs, eggshells, dead chicks, etc. in a timely manner. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CALL MDA HEADQUARTERS AT 410-841-5810.

**Note: Testing for Salmonella Pullorum is mandatory for all hatchery operations, large or small. Inspectors can also test for other poultry diseases upon request, and may test for Avian Influenza for state surveillance purposes.*

Keep *careful* records

Keeping daily track of your flocks' health and productivity allows you to quickly notice changes in productivity or hatchability which may indicate something is wrong.

- Keep records of hatch dates and origin for breeders, vaccinations and parasite treatments, MDA inspection dates, chick hatchability and livability rates, locations where chicks were shipped, etc.
- Track accounting expenses such as egg production, feed consumption, equipment costs, etc.
- Good record keeping shows good business management skills which are necessary to obtain loans to expand your business.