Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

National Agricultural Statistics Service

September 2025

For more information on this and previous NAHMS poultry studies, scan the QR code.

Greetings!

In about two weeks, you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a questionnaire for an important national study, the Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise study, that is being conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

The Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise study will provide a valuable baseline picture of the production, management, and health of this sector of the U.S. poultry industry. It includes operations with table egg layers, broilers, or meat turkeys. This will be the sixth NAHMS study of the poultry industry since 1999 and is especially important at this time due to the ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) outbreak because the study will provide information on small enterprise operations that will help with disease preparedness and response on these operation types and at the national level. In addition, enhanced domestic poultry industry and health information will help support trade, including our ability to open and expand markets. Information from this study may also be used by researchers working on important disease or management concerns and will help education and extension specialists better know and advocate for poultry producers and the U.S. poultry industry.

You are one of the few poultry producers selected to participate in this study, and your answers will represent many other poultry producers like you. Your voluntary participation is essential to this important study. We are required by law to keep your answers confidential, and your responses on the surveys will be used only in combination with other responses.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting this valuable study. It is only with the generous help of people like you that the Poultry 2025 study can be successful. To help you prepare, we have included more information about the study in the accompanying documents. We have also included some informational handouts and links to materials that we hope you will find interesting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-888-424-7828.

Sincerely,

Sarah Blasko
Acting Director, Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health
Veterinary Services, USDA-APHIS-NAHMS

Suzanne Avilla
Chief, Survey Administration Branch
Census & Survey Division, USDA-NASS

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both. This survey is conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: https://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality. Response is voluntary.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB number for this information collection is 0579-0260. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 14 minutes per response. Send comments regarding this burden statement or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to APHIS.PRA@usda.gov.

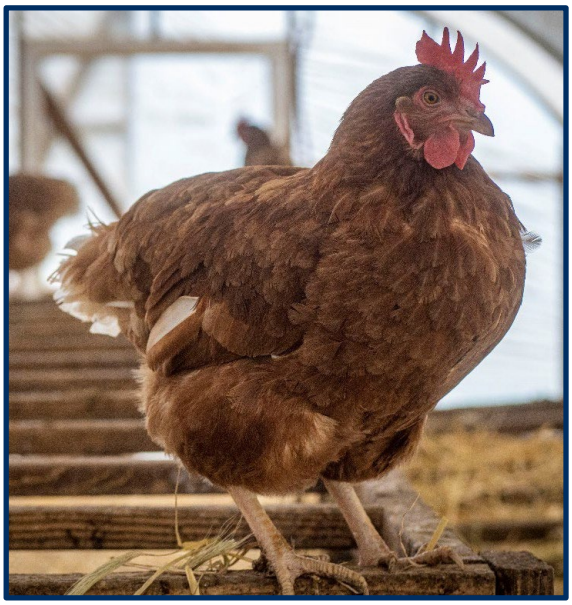
USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NAHMS Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise Study

Study Launch

Overview

In October 2025, the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), will conduct a national study of the U.S. small enterprise poultry industry. This study will take an in-depth look at small enterprise poultry operations and provide new and valuable information regarding management and biosecurity practices for this segment of the U.S. poultry industry.



Approximately 5,000 randomly selected small enterprise table egg layer, broiler, or meat turkey poultry operations in 50 States will be asked to participate.

NAHMS collaborated with poultry veterinarians, university researchers, and extension agents, to define the most critical information needs and knowledge gaps related to small enterprise poultry production.

Study Objectives

The NAHMS Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise Study will:

- Establish baselines for animal health and management practices on U.S. poultry operations with 1,000 to 74,999 table egg layer inventory, 1,000 to 99,999 broilers sold or moved annually, and 1,000 to 29,999 meat turkeys sold or moved annually.
- Describe producer preparedness for animal health emergencies, including highly pathogenic avian influenza.
- Describe management and biosecurity practices of small enterprise operations with a focus on operations in areas of high poultry density, and given the outcome of the sampling, operations in close proximity (less than a one-mile radius) to larger commercial operations.

What Participation Involves

Participation in the study is voluntary, but important for the industry. If an operation is selected for the Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise Study, and decides to participate, their answers will represent many other producers in their State.

In September 2025, selected producers will receive a letter explaining the study. This will be followed with a questionnaire in October 2025. The questionnaire can be completed on paper and mailed back, or through a web interface. Those selected producers who do not complete the survey by paper or web, will receive a follow up phone call from a NASS representative requesting their time to complete the survey by phone.

"The interest in small-enterprise poultry has seemingly increased substantially in recent years. To better understand and support this segment of the industry, it is crucial to have up-to-date and accurate information from these operations. The data collected from this survey will help guide regulators, researchers, and veterinarians in better serving this growing sector of the poultry industry."

Kayla Niel, DVM, MS, DACPV
Avian Diagnostic and Outreach Veterinarian
Penn State University

Scientific Approach

NAHMS was established to collect accurate and valuable information on animal health and management in support of the United States' poultry and livestock industries. Since 1990, NAHMS has reported national estimates on disease prevalence and other factors related to the health of U.S. poultry, sheep, bison, beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, goat, equine, and catfish populations.

NAHMS studies are national in scope, science-based, statistically valid, collaborative, voluntary, and anonymous.

Benefits of the Poultry Small Enterprise 2025 Study

Participating producers will receive:

- In-depth reports and information sheets that will enable study participants to compare their operations—including management decisions and practices—with other farms.
- National estimates describing management practices on small enterprise table egg, broiler, and turkey farms.

The poultry industry will benefit from:

- Benchmark data on important small enterprise poultry health management and biosecurity practices.
- Improved understanding of disease preparedness on small enterprise poultry operations.
- Information important for policy makers and industry stakeholders.
- Identification of educational needs and research priorities.

"I strongly encourage participation in this survey, which will provide valuable information for disease prevention and control measures. Small enterprise poultry flocks are an ever-growing segment of the poultry industry. The spread of diseases, reemergence of diseases, and mutation of common infectious diseases of poultry are continuing challenges. The information from this survey will be especially valuable for providing effective assistance to small enterprise poultry flocks in disease emergencies such as avian influenza."

Sherrill Davison, VMD, MS, MBA, DACPV
Associate Professor of Avian Medicine and Pathology
University of Pennsylvania
School of Veterinary Medicine

Confidentiality

NAHMS relies on voluntary participation. The privacy of every participant is protected. No name or contact information will be associated with individual data, and no data will be reported in a way that could reveal the identity of a participant. Data are presented in an aggregate manner only.

NAHMS is recognized as a statistical unit by the Office of Management and Budget. All information acquired for the NAHMS Poultry 2025 Small Enterprise Study will be used for statistical purposes only and treated as confidential in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA). Data collected under CIPSEA are protected from Freedom of Information requests.

For More Information:

- Please visit www.agcounts.usda.gov/static/get-counted.html and sign up to be counted in future surveys. This ensures that we report the best information to support U.S. agriculture.

USDA Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health
NRRC Building B, M.S. 2E7
2150 Centre Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117
Phone: 866-907-8190
Email: NAHMS@usda.gov

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Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Poultry House

April 7, 2014 / Michael Darre

As spring approaches, the time is almost here to do a good cleaning and disinfecting of your poultry facilities after the long winter. This is especially true if you are considering bringing in new birds or replacing your flock, be they layers, meat birds or show birds. Decontaminating your poultry house is crucial in order to prevent Marek's disease, mycoplasma, respiratory viruses, *E.coli*, mites, and other poultry health problems. Even more important is the control of *Salmonella Enteritidis* (SE), especially in laying hens. SE can colonize in a chicken's intestinal tract without necessarily causing obvious disease in the chicken itself. This may lead to the organism invading other tissues and eventually finding its way into the reproductive tract and ovary, contaminating the egg itself.

In order to reduce SE and other health risks, a complete dry cleaning, washing and disinfection of the poultry house after each flock or at minimum once each year is recommended. Successful cleaning is hard work and requires systematic completion of several sequential steps. Every step is important. Skipping one step or doing an incomplete job at any point will make the next step harder and lead to failure.
Start by removing all birds from the building to be cleaned, along with all equipment that can be cleaned in another place, such as feeders and waterers.

Young chickens in a wood and wire coop. Photos by New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

Dry Cleaning
Sweep or blow dust and other loose dirt off ceilings, light fixtures, walls, cages or nest boxes, fans, air inlets etc. onto the floor. Remove all feed from feeders. Scrape manure and accumulated dust and dirt from perches and roosts. Remove all litter from the floor. Litter can be added to a compost pile. Sweep the floor to remove as much dry material as possible. With a small coop, a wet-dry shop vacuum does a good job of removing this material. However, be careful to clean the filter often as the fine dust from the coop may easily clog the filter and make the vacuum work harder or lead to burn out of the motor.

Wet Cleaning
Turn the power off to the building prior to using any water for cleaning. Wet cleaning is done in three steps: soaking, washing and rinsing. Warm or hot water will do a better job getting through organic matter than cold water. You can use a cheap neutral detergent, like dish soap.

Soaking
Soak the heavily soiled areas (perches and roosting areas, floors, etc.) thoroughly. Use a low pressure sprayer to totally soak all surfaces. Soak until the accumulated dirt and manure has softened to the point it is easily removed.

Washing
Wash every surface in the building, especially window sills, ceiling trusses, wall sills and any surface where dirt and dust may accumulate. The washing solution can be either a neutral detergent (ph between 6 and 8) or an alkaline detergent (ph above 8). Alkaline substances vary in their strength with the strongest causing burns and internal injuries if swallowed. A mild alkali is baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and moderate alkalis include household ammonia, borax and trisodium phosphate. Strong alkalis include washing soda (sodium carbonate) and lye (caustic soda). Mix in hot water—160^{o}F or hotter is best.

A high pressure sprayer is good for this step, but manual scrubbing with a moderately stiff brush is one of the best ways to insure a thorough cleaning. Inspect manually to be sure you have removed all of the dirt and manure from all surfaces. Make sure you carefully clean electrical parts. You may have to remove cover plates and vacuum those areas.

If you have metal surfaces with hard water scale, then you will need to use an acid detergent on those surfaces to remove the scale. Acid detergent involves acid as the major component which is used in dissolving mineral deposits (Calcium and Magnesium precipitates) or hard water deposits from equipment surfaces. Two main groups of acid detergents are: inorganic (HCL, H_2SO_4), and organic (Vinegar, Citric Acid).

Rinsing
A final rinse immediately after washing is recommended to remove any harmful residues and to obtain a spotless building. Mop up puddles as they can rapidly become breeding grounds for salmonellae.

Drying
Thoroughly air-dry the building if disinfection cannot immediately follow rinsing. Open all windows and ventilation openings. Use a blower or fan if available. Cleaning on a dry, sunny day helps in the drying process.

Repairs
Make any repairs to the structure prior to the final disinfection step. Seal any rodent

entry holes at the outside and inside of the building. Apply a small amount of spray foam insulation into the hole, then pack in fine steel wool and top with more spray foam.

Disinfecting

This is a crucial step which the small flock owner might normally overlook. Disinfectants should be applied only after the building and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned, ideally right after rinsing. Disinfectants can be applied by sprays, aerosols or fumigation. Don't be intimidated by the thought of "fumigating" your hen house: for most small flock facilities, using a garden type sprayer is the easiest method, and chances are you already have a suitable disinfectant around the house. The types of disinfectants generally used are phenolic compounds (e.g., Pine-sol, One Stroke, Osyl), iodine or iodophors, (e.g., Betadine and Weladol), chlorine compounds (e.g., Clorox, generic bleach), quaternary ammonium compound (e.g., Roccal D Plus) and oxidizing compounds (e.g., Virkon S, Oxy-Sept 333).

Follow the manufacturer's directions for mixing and dilution of these disinfectants. A good rule of thumb is to apply at the rate of one gallon of diluted disinfectant per 150-200 square feet of surface area. For a more thorough disinfecting, soak waterers and feeders in a 200 ppm chlorine solution (1 tablespoon chlorine bleach per gallon of boiling water).

Michael Darre

Dr. Michael J. Darre is Extension Poultry Specialist at University of Connecticut. He can be reached at michael.darre@uconn.edu or (860) 486-1008.

Posted in Livestock & Dairy, Small Farms Quarterly

SMALL AND BACKYARD POULTRY

Welcome to the Poultry Extension website

BIOSECURITY FOR SMALL POULTRY FLOCKS

***Written by**: Dr. Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky*

The term **biosecurity** refers to the measures taken to prevent the introduction and/or spread of disease in a poultry flock. It is important for every poultry operation to develop, and implement, a biosecurity plan.

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE BIOSECURITY PLAN

ISOLATION

It is important to protect your flocks from contact with other poultry flocks and, when possible, from wild birds. Take the following actions to isolate your flock(s):

- **Maintain a perimeter:** One of the best ways to keep your birds from coming into contact with other birds is to install a perimeter fence. The fence does not have to be expensive to be functional, but it does need to completely surround the birds. It should have gates that are kept closed when not in use. If there are other poultry on neighboring properties, it is highly recommended that a buffer zone is established between the two flocks to prevent mixing of

the birds and transmission of any disease that may affect one flock or another. Screens should be placed on poultry-house windows and ventilation holes to keep out wild birds.

- **Avoid introducing new birds into a flock:** It is recommended that new birds not be introduced into an existing flock. New birds can carry disease into a flock even if they show no outward signs of being sick. The new birds may have recovered from a disease, and they could continue to be carriers. If new birds must be introduced into a flock, the new birds should be quarantined for at least two weeks prior to introduction to see whether they develop any signs of disease. Any birds that show signs of disease during this quarantined period should not be incorporated in the flock. If clinical signs appear in a member of your flock, then it is best to submit the sick (or dead) birds to a poultry diagnostic facility for examination and diagnosis. Depending on what the disease is, you may not want to introduce any of the new birds, with or without clinical signs, into your flock. Workers should move from the existing flock to the new birds and never the reverse unless they change clothing and shower.
- **Avoid contact with other birds:** Anyone working with your poultry flock, as well as anyone visiting your flock, should not have had contact with other birds for at least 24 hours before interacting with the flock. Contact with other birds includes hunting and visiting live bird markets, swap meets where birds are present, and pet stores.
- **Prepare a plan for self-quarantine:** If your birds get sick, stop anyone from visiting your flock. It is recommended that the birds be submitted to a diagnostic lab. During the time that you are waiting for a diagnosis, keep movement between the infected flock and other flocks to a minimum. Human and equipment movement can easily spread disease.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

Traffic control includes both the traffic on your farm as well as the traffic patterns within the farm. Take the following actions to maintain control of the traffic on your farm:

- **Establish a visitor policy:** Visitors should be kept to a minimum. Be selective about who you allow onto your farm. It is important to inquire about where they have been in the last 24 to 48 hours. If visitors might have been near other birds—poultry as well as pets (canaries, parrots, cockatiels, and so on)—they should not be allowed to interact with the flock. It is recommended that you provide any visitors with protective clothing, especially clean boots or disposable booties.
- **Separate clean and dirty functions:** Identify and distinguish tasks with the flock as dirty and clean. Clean functions include bird handling, egg pickup, and feed handling. Dirty functions include manure pickup and handling of dead birds. It is important to do the clean functions

early. Workers should not go from dirty functions to clean functions without showering and changing their clothes completely. Those routinely working with the poultry flock should have specific clothes and shoes or boots that never leave the clean areas (except to be washed).

- **Isolate dead birds and manure management areas:** Areas for dealing with dead birds and litter should be separate from the area occupied by the poultry flock.

SANITATION

It is important to clean materials and equipment that come onto the farm. Those working with the poultry flock should also follow good sanitation practices. Note that raising a small flock under organic conditions does not preclude the use of disinfectants. There are a variety of cleaning and disinfecting materials available for use on organic poultry farms.

Be sure to disinfect vehicles and equipment and to disinfect between flocks:

- **Vehicle disinfection:** All vehicles entering a farm must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent the introduction of disease-causing organisms that can be carried on the vehicles. High-pressure sprayers can effectively remove organic material. It is important to remove the organic material before using disinfectants because such material can make the disinfectants ineffective. Vehicle wheel wells and undercarriages must be fully cleaned and disinfected before the vehicles enter the farm, and they should be cleaned before leaving as well. It is recommended that a separate area for cleaning vehicles be established at a distance from the flock. If this is not an option, then provide vehicles with a parking area that is as far as possible from the flock.
- **Equipment disinfection**: Equipment coming onto the farm must also be cleaned and disinfected. Equipment that has been used for dirty functions must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being used for clean functions.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting between flocks**: A downtime of two weeks between flocks is recommended. This should give sufficient time for sweeping, cleaning, disinfection, and drying of the entire coop. Use downtime to your advantage as many disease agents do not persist very long in the environment without a host to colonize.

PEST CONTROL

Several common poultry pests are capable of introducing and spreading disease on a farm. It is important to control rodents and insects. Be concerned about both flying and crawling insects as they can serve as intermediate hosts for some internal parasites and are capable of transmitting disease agents to your flock.

Rodents will feed on spilled feed, so clean feed spills immediately. Rodents can leave behind feces containing agents of disease that can infect both humans and poultry. Keeping a clean coop and feed room will ensure that you can identify potential pest problems quickly and respond with control measures in a timely manner.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Webinar recording: Biosecurity for backyard flocks (Mar 10, 2015)

Webinar recording: Choosing and using disinfectants with your small and backyard poultry flock (Oct 5, 2017)

Webinar recording: Preventing disease in backyard flocks (May 29, 2019)

BACK TO POULTRY HEALTH MENU

Producer Resources

These links/QR codes are for informational materials that you may find useful. We hope that you take the time to look over these materials and find them helpful.

USDA's National Poultry Improvement Plan
https://www.poultryimprovement.org/

USDA's Defend the Flock materials
Biosecurity is the key to keeping our Nation's poultry healthy. USDA's Defend the Flock education program offers free tools and resources to help everyone who works with or handles poultry follow proper biosecurity practices. These practices will help keep your birds healthy and reduce the risk of avian influenza and other infectious diseases.

Main Defend the Flock page
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock

Defend the Flock – Biosecurity Materials – Checklists
This site includes links for checklists that will help to practice good biosecurity including topics such as biosecurity auditing, biosecurity training, cleaning and disinfection poultry enclosures, equipment and vehicles, personnel and visitors, protect against wild birds, rodents, and insects, coordinating biosecurity, and managing poultry manure and litter, among others. These are available in multiple languages, including English and Spanish.
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock/resources

Defend the Flock, Spring 2025 Newsletter, Biosecurity Basics and Avian Influenza
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dtf-newsletter-spring-2025.pdf