



## **ABOUT**

Avian influenza, commonly referred to as ‘bird flu’, is a highly contagious viral infection of birds. Serious forms of the disease can cause severe symptoms and sudden death in domestic poultry (up to 100 per cent of birds). Mild strains of the disease cause few or no symptoms in poultry and may go undetected in some species of birds, though can result in some deaths. Infected birds shed the avian influenza virus in saliva, nasal secretions and faeces. Wild birds are considered the natural host for the virus and usually carry it without showing any symptoms of the disease. Sometimes the virus spills over from wild birds into domestic bird populations and may cause disease. This can occur through either direct contact between wild and domestic birds, or indirectly through the contamination by wild birds of feed or water of domestic birds.

## **SIGNS**

- sudden death
- respiratory distress
- swelling of the head
- purple discolouration of the comb and wattles
- coughing
- sneezing
- rasping breathing
- rapid decrease in feed and water intake
- decreased egg production
- ruffled feathers
- depression
- closed eyes

- diarrhoea
- occasionally nervous signs.

## **TREATMENT**

Avian influenza viruses spread through direct contact with infected birds or through contaminated feed, water, equipment and clothing. Therefore, biosecurity is the first and most important means of prevention at farm level. Treatment with antiviral compounds is not approved or recommended. It is best to have a monitoring system in place and biosecurity measures as prevention. Vaccination can be a powerful tool to support eradication.