

Complying with Legislative Requirements for Keeping Poultry

Many people are now keeping small numbers of poultry (chickens, hens, ducks, turkeys and geese) for their own domestic use. They may not be aware that all poultry premises must be registered with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF). This is simply to ensure that the Department has a full picture of where poultry are located, so that it can alert owners quickly in the event of a disease outbreak and also give advice on appropriate precautionary, containment and control measures as soon as possible.

Anyone who owns, keeps, deals or trades in poultry on a commercial basis or non-commercial basis (however small the enterprise) including small-scale hatcheries and those who operate from vehicles selling poultry, must also be registered with the DAFF under the Diseases of Animals Act 1966 (Registration of Poultry Premises) Order 2008 (S.I. No. 42 of 2008 as amended by S.I. No. 57 of 2011). Such persons are obliged to adhere to the biosecurity (disease prevention and control) and record keeping requirements outlined in this legislation.

Animal diseases pose a continuing threat to animal, and potentially human health. Some diseases, e.g., avian influenza (bird flu) may also pose an economic threat to Ireland's valuable poultry industry. Registration of poultry keepers assists the DAFF in dealing with these threats and allows the DAFF to communicate with flock owners.

A person in charge of poultry is obliged to implement biosecurity measures. Biosecurity is the term used for all measures that may be taken to prevent the introduction or spread of disease. Refer to "Biosecurity Information for Poultry Flock Owners" and "Information on Avian Influenza Control Measures" available on the DAFF website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/poultry/

If you are not already registered, you must contact your local DAFF office for an application form to register your poultry holding or log onto to the DAFF website.

Other Regulatory Requirements

In addition to registration, you must contact the DAFF on 01 6072000 regarding additional legal requirements to be adhered to if you intend to:

- a) **sell eggs for human consumption,**
- b) **import or export poultry,**
- c) **sell poultry,**
- d) **operate a hatchery**

Duck Egg Production

The investigation into the recent outbreak of *Salmonella* Typhimurium DT8 in humans has found a link with consumption of duck eggs. A number of cases were linked with the consumption of duck eggs from small backyard flocks on private holdings. The advice to consumers is that duck eggs should not be eaten raw and only eat duck eggs that have been thoroughly cooked, until both the white and yolk are solid. **It is important to note that this outbreak of Salmonella is not linked in anyway to the consumption of eggs from hens.** In order to control this outbreak and to prevent further cases of illness, the DAFF has recently introduced new legislation for the control of salmonella in ducks (S.I. No. 565 of 2010). **Where duck eggs are**

being sold (however small the number), it is compulsory than an effective salmonella control plan for the duck flock is in place. This plan must as a minimum comprise of bacteriological sampling, biosecurity and hygiene measures and sourcing of disease free stock. Guidelines have been published for producers of small quantities of duck eggs – (backyard flocks) and is available on the DAFF website:

www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/poultry/

Summary

The person in charge of keeping poultry has responsibilities with regard to disease control and food safety issues. Complying with the legislative requirements for keeping poultry helps keep these two issues under control. Registering as a keeper of poultry with the DAFF is the first step in safeguarding against the outbreak and spread of disease.

Key points:

- **If you own/keep, trade or deal in poultry, you must register with the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (DAFF);**
- **If you are not already registered, you can register at a DAFF office. An application form is also available on the DAFF website.**
- **Registration of poultry flocks (whatever the size) is a legal requirement for the purposes of disease control and food safety;**
- **The owner or person in charge of ducks whose eggs are sold must implement an effective salmonella control plan and be compliant with S.I. No 565 of 2010;**
- **Complying with legislative requirements helps safeguard against the introduction and spread of disease and enhances food safety;**
- **Further information and advice is available on the DAFF website at:**
www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/poultry/