



# SPCA CERTIFIED

## Flock Health Planning for Broiler Chickens

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The following Tables 1 & 2 are provided as examples of minimum response and treatment plans and are not exhaustive. Producers must include additional information, conditions and protocols specific to their operations.

**Table 1. Bird Health Response Plan**

| Trigger for Investigation   | Response Plan  |
|---|--|
| <p>An unexplained increase in mortality</p> <p>Excessive rates include:<br/> Mortality &gt; 0.5% in the first 24 hours<br/> Mortality &gt; 1% in the first week</p> | <p>Specimens collected and submitted to vet / diagnostics lab or call vet</p>  |
| <p>Onset of clinical signs of disease such as reduced activity, huddling, cough, watery eyes, diarrhea, weakness or paralysis</p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor birds</li> <li>▪ Diagnostics</li> <li>▪ Cull</li> <li>▪ Enhance environmental comfort (e.g. heat, ventilation)</li> </ul>                                       |
| <p>An unexplained change in feed / water consumption</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor rate of change</li> <li>▪ Change feed</li> <li>▪ Supplement with vitamins</li> <li>▪ Assess pasture environment (if applicable) and barn environment</li> </ul> |
| <p>Other</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate as appropriate</li> </ul>   |

**Table 2. Treatment Protocols**

| Illness                                   | Signs to look for   | Treatment protocols  | Preventative protocols / when to call a vet   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Bacterial infection:<br>Yolk sacculitis   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High early mortality</li> <li>▪ Mushy, rotten chicks</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cull</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High Dead on Arrivals</li> <li>▪ Mortality &gt; 1% in 1<sup>st</sup> week</li> </ul> |
| Bacterial infection:<br>Ecoli septicemia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High mortality</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cull</li> <li>▪ +/- antibiotics</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mortality &gt; 1% per week</li> </ul>  |
| Coccidiosis                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diarrhea</li> <li>▪ Ill thrift</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amprol</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excessive mortality</li> <li>▪ No response to treatment</li> </ul>                   |
| Infectious bursal disease (IBD)           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May see diarrhea</li> <li>▪ Lethargy</li> <li>▪ Mortality</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Prevent by vaccination, isolation and a good cleaning and disinfection program</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm with serology or lab submission</li> </ul>                                   |
| Marek's Disease                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paralysis</li> <li>▪ Skin lesions at processing</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Prevent by vaccination</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm with lab diagnostics</li> </ul>  |
| Salmonella                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May observe diarrhea</li> <li>▪ May see an increase in mortality</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cull</li> <li>▪ Cleaning and disinfection program</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab culture</li> </ul>  |
| Mites                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feather loss or scratching</li> <li>▪ Skin irritation</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diatomaceous Earth</li> </ul>   |   |
| Respiratory Disease*<br>ILT, IBV, AI, NDV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respiratory distress/difficulty breathing</li> <li>▪ May observe an increase in mortality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Cleaning and disinfection</li> <li>▪ Vaccinate if unable to clean out</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab submission or serology</li> </ul>                                     |

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ascites/<br>Congestive<br>Heart Failure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water belly</li> <li>▪ Blue birds</li> <li>▪ Lethargy</li> <li>▪ Difficulty breathing</li> <li>▪ Mortality following cold nights</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cull</li> <li>▪ Increase heat</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mortality &gt; 1% per week</li> </ul>    |
| Inclusion Body<br>Hepatitis             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased mortality at 2-4 weeks of age</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mortality &gt; 1% in one week</li> </ul> |
| Lameness                                | Paralysis   | Cull and further investigate cause (e.g. feed error, botulism, Marek's Disease)   | Contact the vet if > 1% of flock is affected                                      |
| Lameness                                | Sick bird (bird reluctant to walk but also showing clinical signs of illness – e.g. watery eyes, diarrhea etc.)   | See Table 1 and 2   | Contact the vet if > 1% of flock is affected                                      |
| Lameness                                | Angular leg deformities   | Cull  | Contact the vet if > 1% of flock is affected                                      |
| Lameness                                | Infectious arthritis (joints feel warmer than rest of leg)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treatment with appropriate antibiotic under supervision of vet</li> <li>▪ Prevent by good litter management and low ammonia, which reduces chance of foot pad dermatitis and hock burns</li> </ul> | Contact the vet if > 1% of flock is affected                                      |
| Lameness                                | <p>Rickets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will affect a greater number of birds and present relatively quickly</li> <li>▪ Birds walk gingerly and / or stand up, take a few steps and sit down</li> </ul> | Supplement with vitamin D or general vitamin supplement and observe for improvement for 3 days  | Contact the vet if > 1% of flock is affected                                      |

|   |                                       |      |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|------|--|
|   | Birds laying on hocks<br>(kinky back) | Cull | Contact the vet if ><br>1% of flock is<br>affected |
| For more information on signs of lameness and other relevant information for broiler chickens,<br>also see the BC SPCA lameness factsheet |                                       |      |  |

- \* AI: Avian Influenza
- IBV: Infectious Bronchitis
- ILT: Infectious laryngotracheitis
- NDV: Newcastle Disease Virus