



# SPCA CERTIFIED

## Flock Health Planning for Egg-Laying Chickens

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
An unexplained increase in mortality Excessive rates include: Mortality >0.2% in the first 24 hours Mortality >0.5% monthly when in lay Mortality >5% per flock	Specimens collected and submitted to vet/lab or call vet
Onset of clinical signs of disease such as lethargy, inactivity, huddling, cough, watery eyes, diarrhea	<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>
An unexplained change in feed/water consumption	<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>
An unexplained drop in egg production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diagnostics – lab or vet</li> <li>▪ Serology/blood tests</li> <li>▪ Supplement with vitamins/calcium</li> </ul>
Other	<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
Internal parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unthriftiness</li> <li>▪ Weight loss</li> <li>▪ Vent pecking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ De-worming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High % of flock affected</li> <li>▪ De-worming is not effective</li> </ul>
External parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced egg production</li> <li>▪ Increased mortality</li> <li>▪ Feather pecking</li> <li>▪ Poor feathering</li> <li>▪ Scratching</li> <li>▪ Pale birds</li> <li>▪ Weight loss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insecticidal dust</li> <li>▪ Diatomaceous Earth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excessive mortality</li> <li>▪ Chronic poor production</li> </ul>
Fowl pox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scabs on face and legs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Topical iodine</li> <li>▪ Prevent by vaccination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab submission</li> </ul>
Infectious bursal disease (affects pullets only; age-related immunity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May see diarrhea</li> <li>▪ Vent-pecking</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 by lab submission</li> <li>▪ Tissues and serology may be useful</li> </ul>
Marek's Disease and Lymphoid Leucosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paralysis under 12 weeks of age</li> <li>▪ Mortality</li> <li>▪ Emaciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Prevent Marek's by vaccination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab submission</li> </ul>
Salmonella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Usually no clinical signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No treatment</li> <li>▪ Prevent by cleaning &amp; disinfection program and rodent control</li> <li>▪ Vaccination may help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Usually does not cause a clinical problem</li> </ul>

<p>Respiratory Disease*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Viral: ILT, NDV, IBV, AI</li> <li>▪ Bacterial: Hemophilus Mycoplasma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respiratory distress / difficulty breathing</li> <li>▪ May see an increase in mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If bacterial, antibiotics</li> <li>▪ If viral, no treatment; prevent with vaccination and a good cleaning &amp; disinfecting program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All respiratory diseases should be followed up with and confirmed by lab submission</li> </ul>
<p>Reproductive Tract Infection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distended abdomen</li> <li>▪ Penguin stance</li> <li>▪ Increased mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cull affected birds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased incidence of mortality (usually an individual bird problem)</li> </ul>
<p>Coccidiosis (affects pullets only – age-related immunity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diarrhea</li> <li>▪ May observe an increase in mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amprol</li> <li>▪ Good litter management</li> <li>▪ Increase ventilation</li> <li>▪ Prevent by vaccination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab submission or vet</li> </ul>
<p>Fowl Cholera / Ornithobacteria rhinotracheale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Antibiotics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm by lab submission (bacterial culture)</li> </ul>
<p>Cannibalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dead ‘pecked out’ birds found</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the space available</li> <li>▪ Remove birds displaying cannibalistic behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPCA Certified producers must contact the BC SPCA in the event of an outbreak</li> </ul>

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