

Poultry Health Scheme Members' Handbook



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



Who is the Poultry Health Scheme aimed at?

If you keep the following types of poultry: fowl; turkeys; guinea fowl; ducks; geese; quails; pigeons; pheasants; partridges and ratites and wish to either:

- i. export more than 20 birds or hatching eggs to another European Member State;
- ii. sell birds or eggs to other Poultry Health Scheme members;
- iii. export to certain third countries that require compliance with European Council Directive 90/539/EEC;

then you need to be a member of the Poultry Health Scheme (PHS). For export to another European Member State, live poultry and hatching eggs must come from flocks which have been held for more than six weeks in an establishment approved under the Scheme. You should always consult your local Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) for further details when planning to export live poultry or hatching eggs as there may be additional certification and testing requirements.

Which birds are covered?

Only fowl, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges and ratites may be kept in a Poultry Health Scheme premises. Where appropriate the Scheme premises may be defined as a separate part of a larger establishment. However, if a Scheme premises contains several different species of poultry, there must be a clear separation between them.

How to join the Poultry Health Scheme

1. To join the Poultry Health Scheme you must complete the enclosed application form and return it to your local Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) with a plan of the premises and the registration fee. *(See Annex 2 for details of current fees.)*
2. Arrangements will then be made for an inspection of your premises by a Veterinary Officer (VO) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), or the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), or the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) as appropriate. This inspection will establish whether your premises and its management procedures meet the requirements of Directive 90/539/EEC (as amended). *(Sections B & C of this Handbook outline these requirements).*
3. The Veterinary Officer inspecting your premises will discuss with you how the Directive requirements apply to your particular circumstances. After the inspection you will be advised of any changes that you may need to make to your premises, or operational procedures, to comply fully with the requirements.
4. Depending on the species of poultry and other circumstances you may need to test for Salmonella and Mycoplasma before membership can be confirmed. *(See Annex 1 for details.)*

Revision of the Poultry Health Scheme

5. Systematic records must be kept of your operations and must be available for inspection (*Rules B2g and C2h outline these requirements*).
6. If the veterinary inspection of your premises and operations is satisfactory you will be asked to pay the annual membership fee. As soon as payment is received you will be issued with a Membership number and will be sent a Membership Certificate.

The starting date for your membership will be the date of the satisfactory inspection visit, but note that you will not be able to export until 6 weeks after this date
7. From the starting date of your membership birds and hatching eggs may only enter your flock/hatchery from the following sources:
 - i. from Poultry Health Scheme establishments;
 - ii. from similarly approved establishments in other European Member States;
 - iii. imported from third countries in accordance with Directive 90/539/EEC.
8. If you have a special requirement to introduce stock from non-PHS sources, in order to enrich your genetic base, you must contact your DVM to discuss the necessary procedures, which will involve quarantine and testing of the introduced birds.
9. A veterinary inspection, by a VO or Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI), will be required every year and you will be asked to pay an annual membership fee.
10. Membership may be suspended or revoked if any of the membership rules are contravened, or if certain diseases occur on your premises (see Section A, Rules 13 to 16).

Section A – General information

Aim of the Scheme

1. To implement a system of approval for establishments officially recognised as meeting the requirements of Council Directive 90/539/EEC (as amended) on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in, and imports from third countries of, live poultry and hatching eggs.

Administration

2. The Poultry Health Scheme (PHS) is operated by the State Veterinary Service (SVS) of DEFRA/SEERAD/NAW, with administrative support from the Agriculture Departments.

Veterinary Surgeons

- 3.1 Members may elect to have their annual inspections made by either a DEFRA/SEERAD/NAW Veterinary Officer (VO) or by a Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI) nominated by the member.
- 3.2 If the member opts for a VO inspection this will be chargeable. (*See Annex 2 for details of fees.*)
- 3.3 If the member opts for an LVI inspection the nominated veterinary surgeon must be an LVI on the panel for export/import of poultry, and not employed whole time by the member.

Your local Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) can supply a list of such LVIs if required. **If the member chooses the LVI option, it is the member's own responsibility to arrange for the LVI to make the annual inspection.** The fees of the LVI for the inspection are a matter for private arrangement between the LVI and the member, and they will be in addition to Scheme membership fees.

3.4 Where members have opted for inspections to be done by an LVI and membership is revoked, a visit by a Veterinary Officer (VO) **will** be required before membership is re-established. If membership is suspended then a visit by a VO **may** be required before suspension is lifted. Such visits will be chargeable.

Membership

4.1 Membership of the Scheme is open to individuals or companies in Great Britain, operating at specified premises. A member operating with separate premises at more than one location will be required to register each individual premises separately.

4.2 The categories of membership of the Poultry Health Scheme are:

- i. Flock;
- ii. Hatchery;
- iii. Combined Flock and Hatchery.

4.3 Membership of the Scheme must be approved by DEFRA/SEERAD/NAW acting through the local Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM). A member may withdraw his/her premises from the Scheme at any time, but will not be entitled to a refund of any part of his registration or membership fees.

4.4 Re-admission to the Scheme will be at the discretion of the Department acting through the DVM. A further registration fee will be payable.

4.5 When a member's premises is sold, or otherwise transferred, the new occupant must apply for a new membership in the usual way. Such sales or transfers must not be made on the assumption that the premises will automatically continue to qualify for membership of the Scheme.

Application for Membership

5. The enclosed application form should be returned to your local DVM with the Registration Fee. The DVM will ensure that this is dealt with within 15 days and will arrange for a VO inspection to be made.

Fees

6.1 The current fees are listed in Annex 2. These fees are reviewed annually.

6.2 The Registration Fee is payable in advance by new members when they apply to join the Scheme. It covers the costs of the VO inspection visit.

6.3 The Membership Fee is payable on acceptance into the Scheme and then annually prior to expiry of the membership certificate. **One reminder only will be issued, 4-6 weeks before**

the renewal fees are due.

6.4 Any member who fails to pay any fee due under the Scheme may have membership of the Scheme suspended or revoked in relation to the premises in respect of which the fee is due. The member will be informed in writing and given an opportunity to make representations.

Establishment facilities and operations

7. Members must ensure that their establishment complies with the requirements of the Directive at all times. *(These are outlined in Section B and/or C).*

Testing arrangements

8. Depending on the type of poultry being kept on the establishment, their origin, and whether they are present at the site at the time of the initial examination, testing for Salmonella and/or Mycoplasma may be required. The DVM will advise based on the particular circumstances.

Vaccinations

9. Vaccines used must have valid UK marketing authorisations. Records must be maintained of all medicine usage, including vaccines, and must be available for inspection.

Veterinary Inspections

10.1 An annual inspection must be made by either an LVI or VO to confirm that PHS rules are being complied with.

10.2 The Department reserves the right to make additional checks and inspections during the course of the membership year.

10.3 The member must give such assistance as is necessary to allow such inspections to take place.

Acceptance onto Scheme

11.1 Once a satisfactory VO inspection report has been received by the DVM and the appropriate membership fee has been paid an individual registration number will be allocated. A Membership Certificate including this number will be issued to the member.

11.2 Membership of the Scheme does not exempt the member from other legislation governing the production and marketing of hatching eggs and poultry.

Advertisements

12. A member may draw attention to his membership of the Scheme by advertising, provided that all such advertisements correctly describe his status in the Scheme. The Department reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any advertising material which they consider to be inaccurate.

Breach of the Rules

13. Membership will usually be suspended or revoked if the membership rules are contravened.

Suspensions

14. Membership will be suspended:

- a. pending investigation if:
 - i. avian influenza or Newcastle disease is suspected;
 - ii. poultry or hatching eggs have been received from establishments with suspected or actual infection by avian influenza or Newcastle disease;
 - iii. contact has occurred with establishments where avian influenza or Newcastle disease has been confirmed.
- b. while further tests are made if the results of surveillance indicate suspicion of infection with *Salmonella pullorum*, *gallinarum* or *arizonae*, or *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *meleagridis*;
- c. until completion of measures required by a notice served by a VO or LVI if premises do not satisfy the requirements of Directive 90/539/EEC, outlined in Section B or C.

Revocations

15. Membership will be revoked:

- a. if avian influenza or Newcastle disease is confirmed;
- b. if a second test of an appropriate type confirms the presence of *Salmonella pullorum*, *gallinarum* or *arizonae* or *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *meleagridis*;
- c. if, after a VO or LVI has served a second notice requiring action to be taken, the premises do not comply with the requirements of Directive 90/539/EEC, as outlined in Section B or C.

Restoration of Membership

16. If approval has been revoked:

- a. because of the presence of avian influenza or Newcastle disease membership may be restored following the removal of all restrictions imposed under the Diseases of Poultry (England) Order (2003), or its equivalent in Scotland and Wales. This will be not less than 21 days after slaughter of the infected flock and cleansing and disinfection of the premises to the DVM's satisfaction;
- b. because of the presence of *Salmonella pullorum*, *gallinarum* or *arizonae* it may be restored after both:
 - i. voluntary flock slaughter, cleansing and disinfection:
and:

- ii. after negative results of two environmental tests taken at least 21 days apart. The DVM will advise on the numbers and type of samples required.
- c. because of the presence of *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *meleagridis* it may be restored after either:
 - i. voluntary flock slaughter, cleansing and disinfection:
or:
 - ii. negative results of two tests performed on the entire flock with an interval of at least 60 days. The DVM will advise on the number and type of samples to be taken;
- d. Because of non-compliance with the rules of Directive 90/539/EEC, subject to notices served by a VO or LVI, it may be restored again when the DVM agrees that all the rules of Directive 90/539/EEC are being complied with.

Section B

Breeding and rearing establishments

1. Facilities

- a. The siting and layout of the facilities must be compatible with the type of production followed, ensuring that the introduction of disease can be prevented and, if it is introduced, enabling it to be controlled. If an establishment houses several species of poultry there must be a clear separation between them.
- b. The facilities must provide good hygiene conditions and allow health monitoring to be carried out.
- c. The equipment must be compatible with the type of production pursued, and allow cleansing and disinfection of the facilities and of vehicles used for transporting poultry and eggs at the most suitable point.

2. Rearing

- a. Rearing techniques must be based as far as possible on the 'protected rearing' principle and on the 'all-in/all-out' principle. Depopulation, cleansing and disinfection must be carried out between batches.
- b. The premises must contain only poultry and hatching eggs:
 - i. from PHS establishments;
 - ii. from establishments in European Member States similarly approved in accordance with Directive 90/539/EEC;
 - iii. imported from Third Countries in accordance with Directive 90/539/EEC.
- c. Hygiene rules must be defined in writing by the management and agreed by the inspecting LVI/VO. All personnel and visitors must wear appropriate protective clothing.

- d. Buildings, pens and equipment must be kept in good repair.
- e. Eggs must be collected several times a day (as compatible with the species) and must be clean and be disinfected as soon as possible.
- f. The owner or agent must notify the DVM/LVI of any variation in production performance or any other sign suggesting the presence of Newcastle disease, avian influenza, Salmonella or Mycoplasma. As soon as disease is suspected the DVM/LVI must ensure that samples are sent to an approved laboratory to allow a diagnosis to be made.
- g. The following flock records must be kept, and retained for at least two years after the disposal of the flock:
 - i. movement of stock onto and off the premises
 - ii. production performance
 - iii. morbidity and mortality with causes
 - iv. any laboratory tests with results
 - v. place of origin of the poultry
 - vi. destination of eggs
- h. Where any infectious disease covered by the Scheme occurs (Newcastle disease, avian influenza, Salmonella, Mycoplasma) the results of laboratory tests must be communicated immediately to the DVM/LVI.

Section C

Hatcheries

1. Facilities

- a. The hatchery must be physically and operationally separate from rearing facilities. The layout must allow the following operations to be kept separate:
 - i. egg storage and grading;
 - ii. disinfection;
 - iii. pre-incubation;
 - iv. hatching;
 - v. preparation and packaging of goods for despatch.
- b. Buildings must be protected against wild birds and rodents.
- c. Walls and floors must be of hard-wearing, impervious and washable materials.
- d. Any natural or artificial lighting, air flow and temperature systems must be appropriate to the operation carried out.

- e. Provision must be made for the hygienic disposal of hatchery waste.
- f. Equipment must have smooth and waterproof surfaces.

2. Operation

- a. Hatcheries must operate on a one-way circuit for eggs, mobile equipment and personnel.
- b. Hatching eggs must only be derived:
 - i. from PHS establishments;
 - ii. from establishments in European Member States similarly approved in accordance with Directive 50/539/EEC;
 - iii. imported from Third Countries in accordance with Directive 90/539/EEC.
- c. Hygiene rules must be defined in writing by the management and agreed by the inspecting LVI/VO. All personnel and visitors must wear appropriate protective clothing.
- d. Buildings and equipment must be kept in good repair.
- e. The following must be disinfected:
 - i. eggs – between the time of their arrival and incubation;
 - ii. incubators – regularly;
 - iii. hatchers and equipment – after each batch.
- f. A microbiological quality control programme must be laid down in writing and agreed with the inspecting LVI/VO.
- g. The owner or agent must notify the DVM/LVI of any variation in production performance or any other sign suggesting the presence of Newcastle disease, avian influenza, Salmonella or Mycoplasma. As soon as disease is suspected the DVM/LVI must ensure that samples are sent to an approved laboratory to allow a diagnosis to be made.
- h. Records must be kept for two years, by flock if possible, and show:
 - i. origin of eggs and date of arrival;
 - ii. hatchability;
 - iii. any abnormalities;
 - iv. any laboratory tests with results;
 - v. vaccination details;
 - vi. numbers and destinations of eggs not hatched.
 - viii. destinations of day-old chicks.
- i. Where any infectious disease covered by the Scheme occurs (Newcastle disease, avian influenza, Salmonella, Mycoplasma) the results of laboratory tests must be communicated immediately to the DVM/LVI.

Section D – Definitions

For the purpose of the Scheme:

AHDO means Animal Health Divisional Office.

Department means in England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA); in Scotland, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD); and in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales.

DVM means the Divisional Veterinary Manager (formerly Divisional Veterinary Officer or DVO).

Establishment means a facility or part of a facility which occupies a single site and is devoted to the following activities:

- (a) pedigree breeding establishment: an establishment which produces hatching eggs for the production of breeding poultry;
- (b) breeding establishment: an establishment which produces hatching eggs for the production of productive poultry;
- (c) rearing establishment:
 - (i) either a breeding poultry establishment rearing breeding poultry prior to the reproductive stage;
 - or
 - (ii) a productive poultry rearing establishment rearing egg-laying productive poultry prior to the laying stage;
- (d) hatchery: an establishment which incubates and hatches eggs and supplies day-old chicks;

Flock means all poultry of the same health status kept on the same premises or in the same enclosure and constituting a single epidemiological unit. In housed poultry this will include all birds sharing the same airspace.

LVI means a Local Veterinary Inspector, a private veterinary surgeon to whom the Department has delegated authority to inspect Scheme premises.

Poultry means fowl, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges and ratites reared or kept in captivity for breeding or the production of meat or eggs for consumption or for restocking supplies of game.

PHS means Poultry Health Scheme.

Ratites includes ostriches, emus, rheas, cassowaries, kiwis and tinamous.

Sanitary slaughter means the destruction, subject to all the necessary health safeguards including disinfection, of all poultry and products at the outbreak site which are infected or suspected of being contaminated.

Scheme means Poultry Health Scheme.

SVS means State Veterinary Service.

VO means Veterinary Officer of the State Veterinary Service.

Notes

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone 020 7238 6000
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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