

Poultry producers and BSE controls

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Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI

What is BSE?

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, often called 'mad cow disease') is a disease of cattle that causes brain changes and death. BSE does not occur in Australia. Overseas the disease has been shown to spread through meat products fed to cattle. New South Wales has banned the feeding of all vertebrate animal products, including fish meals and feathers (called 'restricted animal material') to ruminant animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, camelids, alpacas, and deer. These bans provide insurance against any spread of the disease in Australia and satisfy the requirements of our meat export markets.

What connection is there between poultry and BSE?

Most poultry feeds include a significant proportion of meat meal. Poultry feeds which include meat meal should have the following statement on their delivery docket or label.

This product contains restricted animal material – DO NOT FEED TO CATTLE, SHEEP, GOATS OR OTHER RUMINANTS

However, stock such as cattle and sheep could be exposed to this meat meal on poultry farms in a number of ways:

- farmers might feed poultry feed directly to their stock
- stock might get access to spilled poultry feed around silos or sheds
- stock might get access to discarded poultry feed
- stock might get access to litter or manure containing spilled poultry feed – such litter could be within sheds, stacked for removal, stacked for composting, or spread on paddocks.

What do I need to do to protect stock from any risk?

The following actions will help to ensure that ruminant stock on your property are not exposed to the risk of BSE infection and that stock on other properties to which you may supply poultry litter are not put at risk.

Obey label statements

Do not give any poultry feed to ruminant animals such as cattle and sheep unless it says on the delivery docket or invoice that it does *not* contain restricted animal material. If you do not receive such information assume that the poultry food must not be fed to stock and take all the precautions listed below.

Implement quality assurance programs

Develop a quality assurance program that requires tracing and management of feed that is mixed, purchased or used on your farm.

Keep feeds separate on farm

Farms running both poultry (or pigs) and cattle, sheep, goats or deer should ensure that ruminant feedstuffs are not mixed with poultry or pig feeds. Ruminant feeds must not be contaminated during mixing, storage, feeding or transport of poultry (or pig) feeds.

Keeps stock away from poultry sheds and feed silos

If sheep or cattle graze around sheds and silos they could pick up spilled feed that contains meat meal. If necessary, fence these areas off.

Keep stock away from discarded poultry feed

Make sure that if you have waste feed it is disposed of in a way that cattle and sheep do not have access to it. It can only be fed to poultry or pigs.

Keep stock away from poultry litter

Make sure stock do not have access to poultry litter or manure, whether it is in sheds, stacked on the property awaiting disposal, or stacked in heaps for composting or awaiting spreading. This may mean fencing off storage and composting areas.

After spreading litter on pasture, keep stock off and do not graze the pasture for at least 30 days after spreading poultry litter (or manure). This will normally coincide with the regrowth period if litter has been spread on a well-grazed paddock. If regrowth does not occur within 30 days then stock should be kept off the paddock until it does.

This period (which may be longer than 30 days) will ensure that animals do not ingest any poultry feed which may have been present in the litter, provided the litter has been applied at no more than the rates recommended by NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Poultry litter should only be spread on paddocks at the recommended rate of approximately 15 m³/ ha. If this rate is exceeded there could still be litter on the pasture when stock are returned to the paddocks to graze it.

Provide advice to purchasers of poultry litter

If you deliver poultry litter or manure direct to other properties you should ensure that they understand the requirements to keep stock away from such litter or from pastures top dressed with the litter.

Note that it is an offence under the Biosecurity Regulations 2017 to feed stock on, or allow them to have access to, restricted animal material.

More information

- Animal Biosecurity, Department of Primary Industries phone 1800 680 244 or email animal.biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Local Land Services, see <http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/>.
- On transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), see <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/animal/stock-feed-control/national-tse-surveillance-project/tse-surveillance>

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