



## Biosecurity and Vultures

If you are a poultry producer, you know about the importance of biosecurity- the daily practice of keeping disease-causing viruses, bacteria, and parasites (called pathogens) off your farm and away from your flock.

**But did you know that vultures can spread pathogens that make chickens sick, including the virus that causes Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), also known as bird flu?**

Scan code below for  
Vultures – USDA WS Wildlife Disease  
Management Technical Series.



## Barriers Exclude Vultures from Compost Sheds



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# Protect Your Flock...

*against vultures and  
the diseases they spread*



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# How do vultures spread HPAI (bird flu) ?

The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus is found in wild migratory water birds. Vultures are scavengers, eating dead animals, including carcasses of wild birds that may have died from HPAI. Vultures visit waterways where migratory water birds stop during migration. Vultures that become infected with the virus may die; however, they may spread the virus to other locations before death.

Vultures can carry the virus on their feathers, feet, and in their feces. When vultures visit a poultry operation, they can contaminate buildings, the ground, equipment, and compost bins. The virus can then be tracked into the poultry houses by people, equipment, small birds, rodents, or insects.

## How can I protect my flock?

Prevent pathogens from entering your poultry houses by practicing excellent biosecurity. Only clean clothing, footwear, and equipment should be allowed to enter poultry houses when chickens are present. Wash or sanitize hands regularly. Follow all instructions in your company biosecurity plan.

## What can I do about vultures?

**-Habitat Modification:** Removing roost trees or food sources will deter vultures. Vultures eat dead animals, so they are naturally attracted to compost bins. Compost should be properly constructed and covered with 10 to 12 inches of shavings. If vultures persist in visiting a compost shed, construct a barrier to prevent them from entering the shed.

**-Harassment:** Harass vultures when they arrive at the roost site just before dark. *The goal is to prevent even a single bird from roosting.* Do this for at least three days in a row. Pyrotechnics coupled with the use of effigies often works. Other harassment ideas: lasers, air horns, motion-activated sprinklers, and paintball guns.



Example of vultures on compost shed. Photo credit: MBAH



Example of an effigy. Photo credit: USDA-APHIS-WS

**-Effigy:** (a fake or dead vulture)  
Landowners can acquire effigies from the USDA Wildlife Services or build their own using a dog training duck dummy painted black outfitted with fake black wings and black tail. Proper installation is crucial. Hang the effigy by its feet from a high location so birds notice it. A real vulture carcass is extremely effective to deter vultures. It does require a permit from U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

**-Exclusion:** Install perch inhibitors (bird spikes, bird wire) to eliminate perching areas. The installation can be time-consuming and may not be cost effective for large coverage areas.

**-Lethal control:** Property owners are required to have a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service migratory bird depredation permit before using lethal control. Scan QR code for permit info:



\*Mississippi Farm Bureau has a blanket permit for its members.