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eggs, and feed) and people contact (service crews, visitors, and farm workers) make this industry very vulnerable to the spread of poultry diseases from farm to farm and area to area.

Biosecurity (a system aimed at protecting poultry flocks from all types of infectious agents), along with coordination and communication between various poultry-producing areas became the main driving force behind the formation of the Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Extension (MACE) Poultry Health and Management Unit.

In response to the 1983 AI outbreak, poultry extension veterinarian and specialists at the land grant universities in five states (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) joined hands to form MACE. The group believed that if each segment of the poultry industry (commercial egg and poultry operations, small flock owners, feed and egg haulers, service crews, live poultry dealers, truckers, auction markets, and many others) recognizes its potential role in the spread of poultry diseases, preventive measures can be readily taken.

What is biosecurity?

The term "biosecurity" may not be a common household word, but for millions of poultry and livestock producers, it may spell the difference between health and disease. Preventing disease-causing germs or microbes from entering your premises is the key to flock health and the success of your business. It is not as complicated as you think.

Biosecurity, in simple terms, is informed common sense. Do not bring germs to poultry, and do not bring poultry to germs. Bear in mind that you are dealing with persistent, invisible killers that readily survive in dust particles, droppings and debris, waiting to hitch a free ride to a lush living on your poultry farm.

Effective disease prevention reduces emergency diseases like Avian Influenza and exotic Newcastle disease. These diseases cause epidemics on poultry farms, loss of export markets, public alarm, cancellation of poultry shows, and long expensive quarantines, resulting in severe financial losses.

Common diseases like Fowl Cholera, Infectious Laryngotracheitis, Mycoplasmosis, and paratyphoid infection can cause reduced growth and feed conversion, decreased egg production, reduced product quality, and lower customer satisfaction.

How do microbes travel?

Microbes travel from place to place via chicken crates, egg filler flats, trucks, equipment, and people. They can be found on people's hands, in their hair, on clothing, and on shoes. They are found on the skin and in the digestive and respiratory organs of dogs, cats, rats, mice, and wild, free-flying birds. Flies, beetles, and other insects are also notorious spreaders of disease-causing organisms.

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