

Tips for chicken farmers to get through the COVID-19 pandemic

1. COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus that [does not affect chickens](#). This virus is different from the ones that cause IBV in birds.
2. Practice heightened levels of biosecurity, as well as teaching others. University of Maryland Extension has [videos on biosecurity in different languages](#). In addition:
  - a. Limit visits to town.
  - b. Encourage regular hand washing.
  - c. Limit close contact with others; practice social distancing
  - d. If you have employees that need to travel to and from work, here are some links for forms to fill out to show that they are essential workers:
    - i. For [Maryland farm workers](#)
    - ii. For [Delaware farm workers](#)
3. Have a plan for sickness. Who will take care of your chickens and your farm if you get sick: your family, children, employees, or neighbors?
4. Make sure your farm insurance is up to date and that your policy covers loss of income.
  - a. Loss of income is only covered by damage to property, i.e. buildings from lightning, fire, wind collapse, and/or equipment. A poultry company deciding to take action is not covered.
5. Check to make sure your generator is operational and running correctly.
  - a. Do you have enough fuel to run for an extended period of time? (Fuel costs are down, so now is a good time to buy, making sure to add the appropriate fuel preservative.)
  - b. Who will you call if there is a problem?
  - c. Do you have spare oil, oil filters and air filters on hand?
  - d. In case of an emergency, do you have step-by-step instructions on how to start the generator manually and transfer power?
6. Keep a close eye on feed inventory and order feed ahead so if there is any disruption in deliveries, you are covered.
7. With the shortage of PPEs, consider using homemade dust masks or cloth face coverings as an alternative. The CDC has [provided instructions for making them](#).
8. If you are having financial problems, contact your lender at once and work with them now before things become worse. USDA has also made changes to its farm loan practices and taken other measures to provide financial assistance to farmers; [see information about those changes here](#).
9. For educational assistance, the University Extension Systems are still open, but working from home, so give their agents a call. Additionally, there are lots of educational opportunities online and by webinar.
  - a. For the University of Maryland look here: <https://extension.umd.edu/poultry>
  - b. For the University of Delaware look here: <https://sites.udel.edu/poultryextension/>

If you need someone to talk with or have questions, please contact any one of us.

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