



## CARE 614.01 Preventative Health Program for Poultry

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe preventative veterinary care for the poultry at Cornell University teaching and research facilities. Each facility may have supplemental SOPs that further describe their specific manner of operation. This SOP is intended for use by poultry facility staff and Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE) staff. This SOP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and CARE. Any exemption must be submitted for approval by the IACUC prior to its application.

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### 1. Introduction

This SOP details the preventative veterinary health care program utilized to reduce the risk of communicable and zoonotic disease in poultry at Cornell University's teaching and research facilities.

### 2. Materials

- Surgical shearers
- Electric debeaker
- CO<sub>2</sub>
- Physical exam materials
- Vaccines: coccidiosis, bronchitis, Newcastle disease

### 3. Procedures

#### a. Quarantine procedures

##### i. Chickens:

- Maintain a closed flock, except for the annual replenishment of Babcock B-300 layers. Obtain these layers from the approved specific pathogen free (SPF) flock ISA North America at one day old.
- Obtain parental health history prior introducing hatchlings.
- Isolate one day old Babcock B-300 layers in a separate wing of the barn until laying at ~20 weeks of age.

##### ii. Quail:

- Obtain quail eggs from Lake Cumberland Game Birds.
- Place hatchlings in a room separate from the other facility birds.

- b. Potentially painful or distressful procedures
  - i. Chickens:
    - Decombing (dubbing): remove the small protruding comb with a pair of surgical shears, with the bird safely restrained manually. Perform this procedure on chickens 1–10 days old (the majority of the procedures occur at 1–3 days of age).
    - Beak trimming: trim with an electric debeaker, with the bird safely restrained manually. Perform this procedure from 1–6 weeks of age (most cases occur during the first week of life).
  - NOTE:** Only trained staff are authorized to conduct decombing and beak trimming.
  - ii. Quail: no potentially painful or distressful procedures are performed.
- c. Preventative Medicine Program
  - i. Chickens & Quail:
    - Bronchitis and Newcastle disease prevention:
      - (a) Administer Combovac-30® vaccine to chicks 8–10 weeks of age, per label instructions.
      - (b) Administer Triplevac® vaccine to chicks 2–5 days of age, per label instructions. Repeat the vaccination at 16 weeks of age.
      - (c) Vaccination program does not apply to animals kept under specific pathogen free conditions. SPF animals are not routinely vaccinated.
    - Chickens only:
      - (a) Coccidia:
        - (i) Exposure: at 14 days of age, place vaccine (Coccivac®-D, Schering Plough) in shallow pans trays along with bedding and enough water to moisten. Place one vaccine/bedding pan on the floor of each chick pen.
        - (ii) Check pans daily, add water to assure pan contents are kept moist.
        - (iii) Continue exposure for 16 weeks (i.e. until chicks are 18 weeks old).
- d. Euthanasia and disposal of dead animals
  - i. Euthanize individual chickens and quail by CO<sub>2</sub> inhalation. Cervical dislocation can be used for depopulation of large numbers of birds. Euthanasia must be conducted by trained and experienced staff.
  - ii. Incinerate the dead animals at the College of Veterinary Medicine or through a commercial source.

#### 4. Safety

- a. Working with poultry in confined areas can be very loud and aerosolized allergens are present in the environment. Consult the facility manager regarding hearing and breathing protection requirements.
- b. See [CARE SOP 707 Animal Related Injury](#).
- c. See [CARE SOP 715 Personal Protective Equipment](#).
- d. Refer to [CARE Zoonosis](#) web page for zoonotic information specific to poultry

## 5. Contingencies

- a. Post contact information for emergency assistance in a conspicuous location within the animal facility.
- b. Emergency veterinary care is available at all time, including after working hours and on weekends and holidays, through the Poultry Extension Veterinarians of the College of Veterinary Medicine, or CARE (Pager 1-800-349-2456).

## 6. References

CARE SOP 707 Animal Related Injury:

<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE707.pdf>

CARE SOP715 Personal Protective Equipment:

<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE715.pdf>

CARE Zoonosis web page: <http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/zoonoses.html>

*Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching*, Federation of Animal Science Societies: Savoy, IL, 1999.

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