



May 25, 2021

**TO:** All QAD personnel providing services to the poultry and shell egg industries

**FROM:** Angie Snyder  
QAD Director

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**SUBJECT:** QAD 730 - Quality Assessment Division Biosecurity Policy- Services to the Poultry and Shell Egg Industries

This document defines the Quality Assessment Division (QAD) policy regarding biosecurity measures to be followed when providing services to the poultry and shell egg industries. This policy applies to QAD personnel as well as state personnel providing these services on QAD's behalf.

QAD strongly supports biosecurity measures for personnel who conduct grading, inspection, and supervisory activities at facilities where live birds are present. We must take prudent measures to avoid any chance that QAD personnel might inadvertently spread disease from affected areas to non-affected areas. If an animal disease outbreak occurs, it must be abundantly clear that QAD personnel acted in full compliance with this policy and the biosecurity protocols of the companies we serve.

**Annual Training:** All personnel who work in and/or regularly visit poultry and shell egg production and processing facilities with live animals on site as part of their official duties must complete annual training on poultry biosecurity. This training will be made available to everyone in QAD; however, it is mandatory for all licensed shell egg graders/relief graders, as well as applicable auditors, supervisors, shell egg inspectors, and relevant management staff to complete this training annually.

**Prohibition on Possession:** Recognizing that both wild and domesticated birds (pets, waterfowl, seabirds, etc.) are primary vectors for the transmission of disease, it is QAD policy that shell egg graders and shell egg relief graders will refrain from owning, raising or working with small home flocks of poultry, or maintaining in their personal possession any avian species.

Further, any shell egg graders with close personal relationships that might pose an accidental transmission of avian disease from one production facility to another (for example, a spouse, close relative, roommate, etc. that resides with a grader and works at another nearby facility with live birds) must apprise their immediate supervisor.

**Shell Egg Grading:** All QAD personnel providing service at an egg production facility will follow the company's biosecurity procedures. When Grading service is implemented at an egg production facility, facility management must provide their written biosecurity plan and communicate any subsequent changes to QAD. If there is any question regarding the company's

plan, QAD personnel must ask for clarification to ensure grading service can comply with the company's procedures. Any effect of their biosecurity procedures on normal grading service must be reviewed with facility management and documented. Biosecurity procedures will be maintained on file for reference.

QAD personnel are to continually exercise effective disease prevention controls. Unless the owner of the facility or another federal or State agency in a specific geographical area imposes more stringent measures, QAD personnel are to follow the minimum procedures outlined below.

**Shell Egg Graders who report to the same duty location every day are expected to:**

1. Avoid all physical contact with live poultry, poultry housing and, to the extent possible, equipment that comes in contact with live poultry, at the production facility.
2. When possible, park vehicles on paved, concrete, or gravel areas away from poultry housing to avoid contact with dirt, mud, or manure. All practical measures must be taken to keep vehicles clean, especially around the tires and wheel wells.
3. Wash hands with soap and water or use an antibacterial gel or sanitizing wipes upon entering and when leaving production/packing facilities or hatcheries to avoid person-to-person transmission.
4. Wear clean uniforms or clean outer clothing. Always utilize a facility's provided footwear sanitizers.
5. Practice good personal hygiene.
6. Avoid making visits to multiple facilities with live birds during the same day.

**Supervisors, relief graders, auditors, and Shell Egg Surveillance inspectors who visit multiple shell egg and live poultry facilities during the course of their duties must follow additional precautions:**

1. Avoid bringing equipment, bags, and briefcases, onto the property whenever possible. If necessary, use a disinfectant to sanitize the outside surfaces.
2. Drive vehicles through the facility's vehicle wash/sanitizing station. If there is none, wash vehicles after leaving one premises and before entering the next one. Reimbursement maybe requested using form OF-1164 Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business.
3. Adhere to established time between visits. At a minimum, one full day is required between visits to different shell egg facilities with birds on site. A correct interpretation of this policy is that a visit to Plant A with birds on Monday means a visit to Plant B with birds could be conducted no sooner than Wednesday. On the day between, a visit to facilities without live birds on site would be acceptable (for example a further processor or cold storage facility).

If a facility insists on additional biosecurity protocols (including additional days between visits), QAD personnel should comply with the request but inform their supervisor for awareness. Under no circumstances should QAD personnel ignore company-specific biosecurity requirements, even when they are more stringent than QAD's policy.

In rare cases, a facility may request exemptions to certain practices outlined in this QAD policy, requesting less stringent requirements; for example, they may request grading service at two of its facilities with less than one full day between visits. Prior to deviating from QAD's biosecurity policy, the QAD supervisor must obtain the request in writing on company letterhead, along with their written biosecurity plan detailing the steps taken to mitigate disease risk. Before proceeding, the plan must be signed by a company representative and approval received by the applicable QAD Grading Services Branch Regional Office.

**Shell Egg Surveillance Activities:** If access is denied due to biosecurity, and another visit cannot be scheduled during the reporting quarter, QAD personnel should indicate in the comments section of the LP-156 that access was denied due to concerns relating to biosecurity. Additional expenses due to tightened biosecurity should be noted on the LP-76-1 with appropriate comments. However, every effort must be taken to complete visits on time while accommodating biosecurity concerns, including licensing of additional personnel if needed.

Many facilities require that QAD personnel sign a visitor log with simple questions regarding avian species contact, recent travel, etc. These visitor logs may be signed on a routine basis if the questions fall within the scope of service. However, as part of biosecurity audit programs such as the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) and the Safe Quality Food Initiative (SQF), facilities occasionally request QAD personnel sign more comprehensive contractor service agreements, which may contain provisions that conflict with USDA, AMS, or QAD policies. Such agreements must be negotiated with and signed exclusively by the National Office. Therefore, if asked to sign any document beyond a visitor log, contact the QAD Regional Office for guidance.

QAD plays an integral role in the marketing of poultry and shell egg products by adding value through protecting the integrity of the USDA shield, and is committed to supporting the industries we serve. While our goal is always to provide service to customers and support to our employees, biosecurity measures must always come first.

*This policy supersedes the memo dated June 18, 2015, entitled "Biosecurity Measures", and the memo dated December 22, 2015, entitled "QAD Biosecurity Practices" and will be filed as QAD 730 Policy: Quality Assessment Division Biosecurity Policy.*

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