



The Poultry Club

OF GREAT BRITAIN

Update: PCGB meeting with DEFRA – 29.09.2017

Introduction: On Friday afternoon (29th September), the Poultry Club of Great Britain's (PCGB) two liaisons to DEFRA, Jed Dwight and Lee Grant, met with officials at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, including devolved administration representatives from Wales and Scotland.

This meeting was used to raise items that have been brought to the PCGB by its affiliated societies and members, whilst also being an opportunity to discuss items ahead of this year's winter showing season.

The PCGB is pleased to be able to provide the following update following the meeting.

- Item 1: Acceptable modes for transporting birds to and from shows

Background: A large number of PCGB members have been in contact to raise concerns surrounding the way in which they should be transporting their stock to and from shows. In recent years many people have used 'pet carriers' for this. During the summer shows it was advised that cardboard should be put in the front of these carriers to stop shavings from escaping. Members also enquired as to how they can transport large birds from their vehicle to the provided pen within the show.

Answer: Appropriate methods of transporting birds: As previously, all boxes and carriers should be clean, and should be turned away if this is not deemed to be the case. Where possible litter should not be able to escape these carriers, and all possible precautions should be taken to adhere to this requirement. Where litter does escape it should be cleaned up as soon as possible.

Answer: Transportation of large birds (geese, turkeys) into shows: Exhibitors will be able to carry large birds into shows as previously. Show managers should ensure that any litter/faeces is cleaned up afterwards.



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- Item 2: Wildfowl

Background: The British Waterfowl Association - which is affiliated to the Poultry Club of Great Britain – represents the interests of both domestic waterfowl and domestic wildfowl keepers. The PCGB liaisons were pleased take forward a number of queries on behalf of the BWA during this meeting.

DEFRA identify any captive birds (such as pinioned wildfowl) as poultry, and so the same rules apply.

It has to be noted however that wildfowl have very different requirements to domestic poultry, and therefore advice was sought as to the requirements for wildfowl keepers should a housing order be put in place, and also, whether there are extra requirements for 'Waterfowl Only' shows.

Answer: Steps domestic wildfowl keepers should adhere to in the event of a housing order: Firstly, housing orders are dependent on prevention zones, with decisions being taken by DEFRA, the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and DAERA for the four countries. Therefore there should not be an assumption that housing orders will be a requirement across the entire country in the event of a confirmed case of AI. If measures were to be introduced, and birds were within an area felt to pose a higher risk of contamination, it will continue to be expected that all necessary measures are taken to stop contact with wild birds. It is therefore advised that wildfowl should be contained within a netted area, and keepers should have contingency plans in place for this scenario.

Answer: Waterfowl only shows: Although waterfowl are seen to present a greater risk, all waterfowl shows currently fall under 'bird gatherings' and would not be expected to adhere to any additional requirements, other than having waterfowl specialists to check stock entering events, and a vet should be on-call.



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- Item 3: Criteria for a blanket ban on show
- **Background:** As members and affiliated societies will be aware, in December 2016 a case of AI led to a blanket ban on poultry events across the entirety of the UK. The PCGB's liaisons therefore felt it prudent to enquire as to the steps that had been taken during that time, and what triggers might lead to a further ban on poultry gatherings being put in place.

Answer: Steps that would lead to a future ban on gatherings, and steps that have been taken to reduce this risk. Risk measures put in place following cases last winter mean that the UK has far more robust procedures in place when compared to November 2016, and poultry keepers across the country are more aware of what could lead to a case of AI and are taking necessary action to prevent this. Due to the time of year, change in the strain of virus, and the fact that DEFRA are naturally risk averse due to the impact that an outbreak of AI in a show environment presents, officials could give no specific guidance on what steps would lead to a further blanket ban on gatherings.

DEFRA officials did praise the PCGB's proactive approach to informing its members and the wider poultry community, both through social media outlets, and its own methods of publication, and also welcomed the Club's continued interaction with the NFU.



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- Item 4: Requirements for this year's winter shows
- **Background:** As members will be aware, there are a number of requirements that shows need to adhere to, no matter the size of that event. Of particular interest to members has been the requirement for birds to be checked prior to entering the show. The PCGB's liaisons did enquire as to whether this requirement would remain in place.
- **Answer:** Relaxation of checks for winter shows: Due to the timing of our show season, it is likely that the risk level would be high at that time, and therefore it would be unlikely that this requirement would be relaxed. It would, however, be for the poultry expert / vet to determine what level of examination is required. As its biggest event, the PCGB will set out guidance in relation to the National Show momentarily, and this will be provided to all exhibitors prior to the show.
- Item 5: Any Other Business
- **Registration of poultry gatherings:** At the conclusion of our meeting, DEFRA officials informed us that Ministers at the Department regularly enquire as to the impact that imposing a ban on gatherings would have. Therefore, we would strongly recommend that show organisers register the dates for upcoming shows with the relevant authorities as soon as they have been confirmed, ensuring that officials have a greater understanding of the impact that a blanket ban on gatherings could have, and potentially leading to alternative measures being sought.
- **Updates from APHA and the poultry register:** The PCGB's liaisons raised concerns surrounding the irregularity of updates for members via text and email, citing that it was as a result difficult to rely upon them for information. DEFRA officials confirmed that they would investigate this. Officials also said that poultry keepers should look to ensure that details held within the register are kept up to date, and the current social media campaign encourages poultry keepers across the country to take similar action.