

# RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR POULTRY FARMERS

The potential for serious losses in poultry farms can be reduced by implementing a risk management programme to minimise potential hazards. A designated person should oversee the programme to ensure all aspects are properly managed and any required corrective action is implemented without delay.

The following information is provided for guidance purposes only

## 1) COMBUSTIBLE COMPOSITE PANELS

- a) Where possible the fire risk to be reduced by replacing panels with non-combustible (rock wool or mineral wool) panels or by those approved by the Loss Prevention Certification Board (LPCB) achieving LPS 1181:Part 1 EXT A30 for external envelopes and LPS 1181:Part 2 INT-2 for internal areas, as a minimum standard
- b) Welding or cutting equipment, blow lamps, blow torches or similar equipment must not be used either for repairs to combustible composite panels or within 5m of them unless they are:
  - i) protected by non-combustible fire blankets, drapes or screens
  - ii) subject to a strict "permit to work" system
- c) All panels to be inspected at least weekly and damaged panels or facings replaced or repaired. Fixings or joints to be in good condition and tightly secured. A written log of inspections and remedial action to be maintained.

Refer NFU Mutual's Risk Management Data Sheet 'Combustible Composite Panels'.

## 2) ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

- a) The electrical installation must be checked annually, in accordance with 'The NFU Mutual Poultry Farm Checklist', by a qualified electrician
- b) All remedial work recommended by the electrician must be undertaken
- c) Installation and electrical testing of the fixed installation to be undertaken in accordance with the current edition of Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Wiring Regulations: BS7671:2008.
  - i) the frequency of wiring inspection of the premises with IET certification is every 3-5 years in accordance with the recommendations of BS 7671:2008 or Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, or more frequently if advised by your electrician

- ii) thermographic imaging, using heat-sensitive camera equipment, is increasingly undertaken to identify any "hot spots" and provide early warning of potential problems. This is particularly beneficial for high fire hazard risks.
- d) Electric cables or wiring are not to be attached directly to combustible panels. Where this is unavoidable fire resistant cables or non-combustible backing plates or protective sleeves or conduits to be used
- e) High temperature electrical fittings are not to be fitted directly on to or near combustible panels
- f) Access to isolator switches always to be kept clear in case of emergency
- g) Overload protection devices protect the installation from excessive currents arising from faults or other causes and reduce the risk of fire. These include traditional fuses which, if "blown", should only be replaced after tracing and rectifying the fault. Replacement fuses must be of the correct rating for the circuit
- h) In many applications fuses have been superseded by Miniature Circuit Breakers which are more precise and rapid in operation thereby offering better protection. It is recommended that fuses be replaced with Miniature Circuit Breakers
- i) Fuses and Miniature Circuit Breakers do not prevent electrocution or electric shock and so installation of Residual Current Devices should be considered. All circuit breaker devices to be regularly tested to ensure they function correctly.



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### 3) AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

Consider installation of, or upgrading existing system To an automatic fire alarm system conforming to BS5839 specifically designed to provide early warning fire detection. A programme of testing, servicing, checking and maintenance in accordance with the installer's recommendations to be in place and documented.

### 4) PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Adequate extinguishers to be located throughout the premises, with at least one dry powder appliance located within the control room of each shed. Regular inspection and maintenance to be undertaken and recorded by an approved supplier.

### 5) HEATING

Ideally heating appliances should be externally mounted space heaters with heat ducted into the buildings. Where this is not possible the following precautions to be complied with:

- a) heaters to be fitted with automatic fuel cut off devices
- b) second stage gas regulators to be located outside the building and replaced, as recommended by the manufacturer, via the stated service programme
- c) gas fired brooder heaters to be fitted with a safety chain suspended from a separate strong point.

### 6) HOUSEKEEPING

- a) Smoking to be permitted only in a dedicated area preferably at least 7m detached from the poultry buildings and to be provided with ash trays and fire extinguishers, and suitable notices prominently displayed
- b) External storage of combustible or trade waste materials to be at least 7m (but wherever possible 10m) from the fabric of the building, preferably within fenced or enclosed areas
- c) Internal storage of combustible or waste materials, other than bedding (litter), to be kept to a minimum and within designated areas at least 3m from combustible panels
- d) Vegetation growing in the immediate vicinity of all poultry sheds to be cut back regularly
- e) Battery operated vehicle and equipment charging to be undertaken in an area of non-combustible construction or outside the buildings. Where this is not possible charging not to be undertaken within 3m of combustible panels unless they are protected by non-combustible materials

- f) An effective rodent control programme to be implemented, either by an experienced contractor or an employee who has undergone appropriate training
- g) Direct application of flame to the floor surface for sanitisation purposes can give rise to fire from exposed elements of combustible construction or residual bedding. If a heat sanitisation system is necessary steam generation plant is recommended.

### 7) HEAT STRESS

Losses from heat stress can be reduced by:

- a) ensuring the stocking density does not exceed The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) guidelines (particularly in the summer months)
- b) walls and roof being adequately insulated to reduce heat transfer. The recommended standard U value is  $0.4 \text{ W/m}^2/\text{°C}$
- c) ensuring the recommended maximum ventilation rates are achieved. The rate depends upon the type of bird and the weight to which they are grown
- d) poultry staff being able to recognise early signs of heat stress and there being written instructions on how to deal with hot weather emergencies
- e) feed being restricted during hot weather, but care must be taken when reintroducing food
- f) internal misting systems except where the weather is humid.

More information is available in the latest addition of the DEFRA publication 'Heat Stress in Poultry - Solving the Problem'.

### 8) ENVIRONMENTAL ALARM

To reduce losses from heat stress an environmental alarm should be installed to provide automatic detection of:

- a) a fall or rise in the temperature
- b) a failure in the electricity supply
- c) loss of power to the fan control panel
- d) where three phase electricity is present, loss of a single phase.

The environmental alarm should be tested weekly to ensure it is fully operational and be serviced annually by a suitably qualified engineer with a test log retained. It should also give a warning to a remote alarm receiving centre.

## 9) BACK UP GENERATOR

- a) To reduce losses from heat stress and machinery breakdown a back up generator to be available with sufficient capacity to power the whole installation and tested weekly for 15 minutes and under full load at least every three months for thirty minutes with a test log retained. Generators with an automatic cut in facility are recommended and capable of being operated within 60 seconds of a mains power failure
- b) Generators that are powered by a tractor to have the Power Take Off (PTO) shaft attached permanently
- c) Fuel powered generators to have sufficient fuel available on-site to run and provide adequate time for additional fuel to be obtained for any protracted breakdowns.

## 10) SECURITY

- a) The sheds and any access gates to be secured by a close shackle padlock, with a minimum of five levers with proprietary locking bar conforming to EN12320 and achieving security classification 5 or above
- b) It is recommended security lighting, operational from dawn till dusk, be installed and located
  - i) to avoid the production of shadowed areas where intruders can operate unseen
  - ii) out of reach of vandals and fitted with protective coverings.

## 11) FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

A fire risk assessment must be undertaken to identify the construction and evaluate the potential for serious fire in the light of working practices, inception hazards and likely fire spread. Areas to be classified as high, medium or low. The results of the assessment should be documented, together with action points, and reviewed regularly. Completion of a fire risk assessment is required in accordance with current legislation.



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### IMPORTANT NOTE

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