



POULTRY WELFARE RULES & GUIDELINES

Animal Health and Welfare

The Trustees aim to ensure that all livestock on Bustardthorpe Allotments site are clean, comfortable and well cared for. If you are concerned about the conditions or treatment of any livestock, please contact any Trustee in strict confidence.

The Rules Governing Poultry Welfare ***(Full compliance of this section is required)***

A - The needs of your poultry

1. A safe environment

They are to be in an enclosure that keeps them in and predators out.

They are to have a nesting box and a 'house' of some sort for overnight, and somewhere to **shelter** during the day from sun, rain, or each other. All these areas are to be kept clean, so reducing the possibilities of infestation and infection.

2. Diet

A balanced pellet is all that the birds require on a nutritional basis for their good health. For digestion an available source of grit is essential. Enrichment is obtained from waste vegetables from your plot, in particular brassicas. Enrichment will reduce pecking and bullying.

3. Somewhere to roam outside

Livestock are to be given sufficient space to move freely and to follow their normal patterns of behaviour such as scratching the ground, pecking for food and dust bathing. To stop the ground becoming foul with the build-up of pests and diseases, which can remain dormant in the soil for up to 8 years, the ground is to be rested and rotated periodically.

4. If in the slightest doubt seek help

If one of your birds starts behaving differently, i.e. standing about on its own; shrugging; feels different when you handle them; or is showing signs of being hen-pecked, e.g. the comb is scabby; it is really important to seek advice as quickly as possible in case what is wrong with them is infectious. The potential for cross-infection should be remembered if others come on to your plot.

It might be that, in the first instance, you seek advice from another plot holder who has poultry. Be prepared to go to the vet, both transportation-wise and financially. If your bird has to be transported, make sure the container is covered – this will keep them calmer.

Please remember the potential effects not only to your own flock, but on other ploholders flocks.



Failure to follow the basic recommendations for keeping poultry could mean the loss of your livestock and/or prosecution by the relevant authorities.

B - Good Husbandry practice

1. Ensuring physical well-being

A **wormer** such as Vermex should be administered monthly. This will ensure healthy, and therefore productive hens.

If your hens are in a wooden structure it is essential to dust the hens monthly with **red mite** powder and have a liquid form that can be sprayed on the structure, particularly on cracks and joints in the wood. It is also good practise to have a hand brush that can be used to sweep over the whole structure, particularly concentrating on the cracks and joints in the wood.

It is useful to have a **tonic** in case one of your hens goes off their lay, starts laying soft shelled eggs or seems to be a bit under the weather. Prompt administration of a tonic can often remedy the problem.

Any medications or tonics work most effectively if they are those that are added to the drinking water. Powdered forms can end up in the dust at the bottom of the feeder and the hens will then not get the recommended dose.

Even though it may be only one hen that you want to treat it will never do the rest of your flock any harm to have the same treatment.

2. A visit at least once a day

To check that they are OK, that they have **clean water** and plenty of **food**, and where appropriate to collect eggs. Stale or contaminated food or water must be removed daily. In freezing weather you will need to frequently check that drinking water has not frozen over and thaw or replace it as appropriate.

3. To be handled at least once a month

This is very important so that you become familiar with what your bird's 'normal' weight is, in comparison with previously and with others in your flock. It also gives you an opportunity to have a close check of legs, eyes, crop etc and so identify potential problems at a stage when they can be easily rectified. This is an ideal time to apply red mite powder.

Interesting fact: mites can 'walk' 100 metres.



C - Sources of infection both to you and your poultry

Livestock does attract vermin, but wild birds in your hen area also have potential for transferring disease such as Avian Flu.

Grain and other foodstuffs are to be stored in rodent proof containers such as **metal dustbins with lids** that are not dislodgeable. Any spillages outside the storage containers are to be cleared up immediately. Do not leave grain lying on the ground, and do not have wild bird feeders in the area where you have your hens. Ideally, the food should be in a **treddle feeder**, which will not only prevent wild birds and vermin from accessing the feed, so spreading disease, but will also be much more cost effective.

Ensure that you always have some form of rodent trap/poison in a facility that is not accessible by your poultry or any other wildlife.

The Association's licensed pest controller, will automatically ensure that there is maintenance pest control in the form of a 'Rat Box' on your plot. You are required to give him free and unrestricted access to these boxes when requested. If, however, you think there are rats in your allotment garden, please email bustardthorpeallotments@gmail.com.

D – Emergencies

In an emergency, action will be taken in the best interests of the welfare of livestock. In the case of fire or vandalism, if necessary, poultry will be removed to a place of safe keeping until you, or one of your emergency contacts can be contacted. Remember to advise by email bustardthorpeallotments@gmail.com. if the contact details you supplied change. In particular, the two telephone numbers.

E - Avian Flu

1 - Your obligation

When advised of an outbreak you must immediately be able to ensure that your poultry is in an area that cannot be accessed by any other birds, particular small wild ones that normally get in through netting or chicken wire. This area must be big enough to house the hens in comfort together with water and food for a period of several months or until advised it is safe to let them out. Also, you should have the means to put disinfectant foot baths at the entry to your plot and to limit the number of people accessing your plot.



2 - The official requirement

If you find more than three dead birds of the same species, or more than five dead birds of different species in the same location, you will immediately contact the Department of the Environment Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who will arrange for the carcasses to be tested for disease. The helpline number is 03459 335577 (8.30am-5.00pm weekdays). You will also need to immediately notify the Association.

F - Bustardthorpe Allotment Association Requirements

Please email bustardthorpeallotments@gmail.com immediately if:

- ANY death in your flock, whether of natural cause or other reason.
- Birds ill with respiratory signs, e.g. sneezing or discharge from the nostril s.
- Any new additions to your flock.

The Association needs to record bird movements and sources of new stock.

Advice Sheet collator – Jo Rogers
Revised and updated 08.02.2026