



Case study:
**Building better biosecurity:
a farmer's journey**

Case study: Josh Watson

Buckinghamshire farmer Josh Watson and his partner run two thriving egg businesses: Oakwood Eggs and Wenlock Eggs. They are in their sixth year of operation having built their venture from the ground up. Their farm uses a 42,000-bird flat deck system across roughly 100 acres of grassland.

Josh says of his job "I love the farming life, it's freedom. We can do what we want. You haven't got to get up and go to work. You're always at work. You can walk around everywhere. Looking at the scenery, listen to the chickens. You don't get this in an office!"



The challenges

The ongoing **threat of disease**

2

Since 2021, there have been 371 official cases of avian influenza (AI) in the UK, and Josh recognises that he has been extremely lucky to date in avoiding an outbreak at his property. He attributes this partly to his farm's location "we're not too bad here, we're more inland. So we're quite lucky," referring to the many farms in coastal locations which suffered from AI outbreaks traced back to migratory seabirds.

"If avian flu ever found it's way onto our farm it would just destroy everything we've ever worked towards."

Josh Watson, Egg Producer

Josh understands the severe consequences of an outbreak, "If avian flu ever found its way onto our farm, it would destroy everything we've worked towards," he said.

The financial burdens of such an outbreak are also daunting, as Josh explained that "We'd have to deplete the birds, we'd have to pay to have it all cleaned out, and the sheds would probably be empty for a year without income. I'd still have to pay staff or lay them off. It's not a situation anyone wants to be in."

To best protect his businesses from disease incursion, Josh wanted to invest in his biosecurity - putting the correct measures in place, with expert advice.





Insurers being **stricter with cover** due to **high disease levels**

As avian influenza spread rapidly across the country from 2021 to 2023, insurers urged farmers to put extensive biosecurity measures and contingency planning in place, to demonstrate their proactiveness to risk aversion in order to give them the correct cover.

Without these in place, farmers run the risk of not being appropriately insured, which can cause huge financial losses should an outbreak occur. As Neal Samet, General Manager at Livetec Systems explained the dilemmas many poultry farmers face "Insurance against disease outbreaks is essential. Not having it could have huge implications further down the line such as losing your income or even your house."

Josh wanted to make sure that he was properly insured for any situation. To best protect his business, Josh wanted to review his biosecurity and planning processes, so he could demonstrate his proactiveness to risk aversion, and obtain the correct insurance for his business.

"If you've got 30,000 birds, that's 30,000 eggs a day, and that's a huge loss. It's unsustainable for more than a couple of months."

Neal Samet, General
Manager, Livetec Systems

The decision

With the threat of disease incursion looming large, and a desire to protect his business, Josh knew he had to start reviewing his biosecurity - but didn't necessarily know where to start, or what to do.

But why Livetec? "Livetec are the leaders in biosecurity. So we wanted to partner with them to sort out our biosecurity needs. I was reassured by their experience and expertise. They know exactly what they are doing and it takes the pressure off you, you can breathe easier."

Explaining the collaborate approach Livetec takes with farmers, Josh explained "We sat down with them and went through everything, it was great to see the protection they offer from gate to livestock."

"They come out, they assess the site, they give me a site plan of what I can improve, what they like. They listened very well to us. And we listened to them. We work have very well as a team to progress, and we are always improving, every day."

"Knowing the what and the how of the process is so important to relieving the fears and stresses of a disease outbreak and that's where Livetec comes in... at every step we make sure we explain the process and what is going to happen next. It helps provide reassurance to farmers."

Neal Samet, General Manager, Livetec Systems



The result

What **services** did Josh use?

→ **Biosecurity Advisory Service**

→ **Livestock Protect App**

For Josh, it was clear where he should concentrate his efforts “The most important thing we can focus on now is biosecurity. Investing in effective biosecurity protects your business in the long run. It's well worth it”.

Reflecting on his approach to biosecurity prior to working with Livetec, Josh explained “Before, we didn't really know what biosecurity meant,” he admitted. “We didn't worry about things like changing shoes. We pushed it to one side and just thought we're small, avian flu is never going to happen here.”

Underlining the significance of a changed approach to biosecurity, Josh noted the meticulous hygiene practices that are now in place: “We're now so focussed on ensuring that everybody's 100% clean.”

“The threat of a disease outbreak places huge pressures on farmers”

Neal Samet, General Manager, Livetec Systems



The virus lives successfully on your body and other surfaces so effective handwashing is a vital first step. It might seem a bit over the top, but you have to see it through and get every part of it right every time if it is to be effective."

Breaking each area of the farm into different ranges, Livetec's biosecurity takes a unique approach.

"In simple terms, try to imagine your poultry shed is a nuclear reactor and ensure that nobody can get in it or near it. Make sure every possible biosecurity element has been thought of and addressed before allowing any sort of incursion."

Neal Samet, General Manager, Livetec Systems

This approach is now spread across the premises, as Josh explains everything about his new protocols, for farmer workers, external personnel and contractors, "We want to know where they have been," he said, "Have they washed their vehicle's wheels? Have they changed their footwear?" Having additional PPE such as boot covers and overalls, and insisting on their use are now vital parts of Josh's procedures for farm visitors. As well as biosecurity barriers, which force users to change their shoes before they come close to the birds.

Following the spread of notifiable disease is also an essential practice Josh has implemented. Using the Livestock Protect App, Josh is confident that "If an avian flu case goes off, we get alerted in minutes. We know where everything is, we know we can tell our family and our staff, don't go near this area, don't go here. It's great that we can always monitor everything that's going on, it takes a lot of pressure off you."

"We have been working with Livetec for just over a year now, and we have seen a lot of improvements and change. They've helped us a massive amount, and we couldn't be more appreciative of what they've done for us."

Josh Watson, Egg Producer



Josh Watson, Egg Producer:

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Getting Livetec on board is very good value for money. They could save you millions of pounds on your poultry unit, so the costs would pale into insignificance. We all need to look at the big picture, and that's what Livetec can help us do.

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I'd recommend Livetec every day of the week. They're helpful, they're friendly, and they listened to us. Their biosecurity advisor gave us expert, actionable advice which strengthened our onsite biosecurity from day one.

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Livetec Biosecurity

► Biosecurity Advisory Service

Our Biosecurity Advisory Service provides you with an on-farm visit with a biosecurity expert. Our on-farm discovery sessions make us a supportive partner, helping you to minimise risks and imparting knowledge so that you can better protect your farm from disease incursion.



► Contingency Plan

Our Contingency Plans encompass every aspect of farming businesses, risks and emergencies that could arise in the future. We help you to design strategies to manage the impact of these concerns. A comprehensive package, this helps make you compliant and insurable.



► Biosecurity Plan

Without a Biosecurity Plan in place, you are leaving your business and animals highly susceptible to disease incursion. We document your biosecurity plans to encompass and outline all of the measures that must be followed by every single person on/off-farm to prevent the introduction of deadly pathogens.



► Emergency Response Plan

An Infected Premises Response plan or, as we call them, an Emergency Response Plan, significantly enhances your preparedness and is designed to cover everything that APHA and insurance brokers require if and when they visit your farm business. This plan holds all the necessary critical information, in one place, putting your mind at rest during a time of crisis.



► Cleansing and Disinfection Plan

Our Cleansing and Disinfection plan is designed to give you the framework for all of the measures you need to take, with clear instructions that comply with APHA requirements.



► Cost of Depopulation Report

Our Cost of Depopulation calculator will help you accurately assess all catching and disposal costs related to depopulation, assisting you in gaining the correct level of insurance.



Now updated for 2024

► National Outbreak Plan

Our National Outbreak Plan has been designed to comply with the regulations and requirements set by the UK government, providing bird owners with everything you need to know should you be impacted by a disease outbreak or fall within a restriction zone.

Free on the Livestock Protect App 



► The Livestock Protect App

You can stay ahead of bird flu outbreaks with real-time alerts from across the UK delivered to your phone. So, if there's an outbreak near your premises you can be proactive and protect your poultry - whether the threats come from wild birds or neighbouring premises.



[Learn more](#)

To find out more about how our plans can help your farming business, please visit www.livetecsystems.co.uk/plans or email us for more information sales@livetecsystems.co.uk

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