



Case study:  
**Staffordshire turkey producer  
takes proactive steps to protect  
business against AI**



With an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) in place across England and further housing measures imposed in parts of the Midlands, poultry producers remain on high alert.

At Toft Farm Growers, a mixed family business near Stafford, led by Mark Holt, tight biosecurity is the first line of defence in protecting their substantial turkey flock.

However, they also recognise the importance of being prepared for the worst – having a clear action plan in place should an outbreak occur.

## The breakdown

### Comprehensive **biosecurity** protocols

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Formerly a dairy farming business, the Holt family diversified into poultry in 2019 to complement their 260ha arable enterprise. Four modern shed units were built, now housing approximately 40,000 turkeys in total that supply Avara Foods.

Freddie Webb, Toft Farm Growers' poultry shed manager, explains they work closely with Avara and biosecurity experts Livetec Systems to maintain maximum protection for both their birds and business income.

**"Birds arrive from the hatchery at a day old, with stags grown on until 140 days, while the hens are thinned out, being a new site, we're luckily set up to be as biosecure as possible."**

Freddie Webb, Farm Manager at Toft Farm Growers Ltd

**"After talking to the farm who had contracted AI, they mentioned how difficult it was to have everything organised when dealing with APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency)."**

Freddie Webb, Farm Manager at Toft Farm Growers Ltd

**The measures implemented at Toft Farm to minimise the risk of disease transmission include 'shower on' facilities, shed-specific clothing, and step-over barriers.**

Mr Webb adds: "One handy thing we've installed more recently is a pressure washer permanently rigged up on the yard, so we can easily spray disinfectant all over the yard or onto any incoming vehicles – there's no skimping on disinfection."

**As part of assurance schemes with Avara, Red Tractor, Marks & Spencer and Tesco, annual biosecurity audits are completed across the site.**

"On top of that, we have the support of our Avara area manager who makes recommendations on how we can uphold tight biosecurity measures," says Mr Webb.

**Despite these measures, he acknowledges the risk of AI remains, particularly from third-party visitors such as contractors and catching teams.**

**This risk became clear when another farm in their supplier group contracted AI.**

"After talking to the farm who had contracted AI, they mentioned how difficult it was to have everything organised when dealing with APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency)," says Mr Webb.

"From organising muck removal, cleaning and disinfection, to liaising with APHA to provide the information they needed about the farm that might not necessarily be right to hand – it sounded very stressful." This prompted Mr Webb and his team to take additional preparatory steps. "Should the worst happen, we wanted to be well prepared with an outbreak management plan in place," he says.





# The solution

## What services did **Freddie** use?

→ **Livetec Emergency Response Plan (ERP)**

→ **Livetec Systems App**

With support from Livetec, the Toft Farm team developed an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to ensure they could act immediately if AI struck.

Julian Sparrey, technical director at Livetec, explains they work side-by-side with poultry managers to create a bespoke action plans, including essential documentation, such as premises maps and key contact lists. "When speed is critical in an emergency, being forewarned is forearmed," says Mr Sparrey.

"This plan is incredibly valuable for helping farm businesses reduce the time between suspecting disease and starting the recovery process, helping them return to normal operations as fast as possible." He highlights the financial benefits of being prepared.

"For instance, contingency planning support from Livetec enabled BFREPA chairman and Scottish egg producer, James Baxter, to save over £45,000 by acting quickly when he was impacted by AI in 2023," says Mr Sparrey.

These savings were thanks to speed - crucial for both hen welfare and ensuring the best possible valuation of the surviving hens, which directly impacts compensation. "By streamlining the paperwork process with the APHA vet, who was then able to assess the live hens more quickly, Mr Baxter maximised the compensation he received," Mr Sparrey says.

Having key documents readily available can make all the difference in such situations. Producers are provided with two copies of the ERP, one to follow and another to hand over to officials.

Mr Webb reinforces this point: "Heaven forbid, an outbreak happens on our farm, it would obviously be a highly stressful time." In that situation, when you're trying to tell lots of officials what they need to know, the easiest thing is to have it all in one place, in an easy-to-access document that we can hand over to APHA. "While we're insured for an outbreak, it's still crucial to limit the length of time you're destocked for to minimise loss of income." If we're ready to go when APHA turn up and get that process rolling quicker, we'd hopefully be back up and running that much sooner."

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Julian Sparrey,  
Group Technical  
Director  
Livetec Systems

# Freddie Webb, Farm Manager:

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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.



## ► 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.



## ► 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 Livetec Systems App



## ► The Livetec Systems 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.

View Online



Learn more



Learn more

## ► Livestock Protect Platform: Digital Biosecurity365

Livestock Protect is Livetec's powerful, subscription-based platform built specifically for poultry producers like you. It puts control back in your hands - delivering the insights and tools needed to manage biosecurity, disease risk, and site compliance all in one place.

View Online



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

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