



Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)

“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”

Facts About Fowl Registration

During the 2003 Texas legislative session, House Bill 2328 was passed and signed into law. It required the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency, to develop a registration program for fowl sellers, distributors and transporters who do not participate in recognized poultry or fowl disease surveillance programs.

In early 2004, the TAHC's commissioners adopted regulations for the registration program, effective May 1, 2004. In March 2009, the regulations were expanded to include live bird markets, live bird production units, and live bird market distributors. The regulations are in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 4 Agriculture, Chapter 54 Domestic and Exotic Fowl Registration.

Why was this program developed?

Many poultry diseases are highly contagious, and during an outbreak, threaten the state's commercial chicken and turkey industry, non-commercial flocks, caged pet birds and fowl raised for agricultural exhibition.

In Texas in 2003, a non-commercial flock in the El Paso area was infected with Exotic Newcastle Disease (END), and in early 2004, a flock near Gonzales was diagnosed with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Immediate action must be taken to detect and depopulate flocks infected with these potentially deadly bird diseases.

Fortunately, in both instances, infection and depopulation was limited to a few flocks. However, to ensure that all infection was detected-- and to regain trade status with other states and countries--flocks as far away as 30 miles were tested. Precious time was lost, however, while state and federal animal health teams combed the countryside to locate non-commercial flocks. By registering flocks, information about disease outbreaks can be distributed quickly, and disease surveillance can be conducted more efficiently and effectively.

The TAHC works closely with commercial poultry operators, who conduct routine disease surveillance and testing. During an outbreak, surveillance is increased, to detect the introduction of disease.

Who has to register?

- Sellers of domestic fowl, or domestic AND exotic fowl at public sites, such as auctions, flea markets, roadside stands and other public venues, such as feed stores, and live bird markets.
- Dealers, or transporters, or distributors who move or sell domestic fowl, or domestic AND exotic fowl between a production system and a live bird market or fowl market.
- Dealers, transporters, or distributors who acquire domestic fowl, or domestic AND exotic fowl from a number of flocks or geographic areas, so they can be resold.
- Transporters, who for hire, move domestic fowl, or domestic AND exotic fowl from one producer's premise to another, to live bird markets, fowl markets or to other location. (A transporter does not include a producer who moves their own fowl to a venue for sale.)
- Dealers, or transporters, or distributors from out of state, who, in Texas, sell, distribute or transport domestic fowl, or domestic AND exotic fowl.

Registration primarily targets domestic fowl, such as chickens, turkeys, ducks and game fowl raised for food, eggs or agricultural exhibition. However, dealers, distributors or transporters of exotic or pet birds (parakeets, parrots and a host of other caged birds) must register if their birds are commingled or transported with domestic fowl, or are sold at the same public venue with domestic fowl.

When birds of any species are commingled together, they can be exposed to poultry diseases, or transport viruses or bacteria, even if they are not susceptible to a particular infection. In a disease outbreak, it may be necessary to trace the movement and sale of these pet birds. At sales, all fowl and birds must be confined to help reduce the chance for disease exposure.

NOTE: The registration program DOES NOT affect existing TAHC interstate movement requirements, or regulations requiring that poultry offered for public sale or trade originate from flocks or hatcheries that are free of pullorum-typhoid, diseases caused by Salmonella bacteria. Sellers must furnish proof of their source of poultry or hatching eggs and be qualified by the Texas Pullorum-Typhoid Program, as prescribed by the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) and/or the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

Are there registration exemptions?

Yes! Registration is not required for:

- Dealers, transporters or distributors who handle ONLY exotic fowl, such as parrots or parakeets. To remain exempt, the birds must not be commingled with or sold at the same venue as domestic fowl, such as chickens, ducks or turkeys.
- Sellers who sell birds ONLY from their home or premises.
- Owners whose flocks participate in the National Poultry Improvement Plan's (NPIP) U.S. Pullorum-Typhoid Clean (PT) and U.S. Avian Influenza Clean (LPAI) programs.
- Persons who deal only in baby poultry originating from an NPIP hatchery.
- Owners whose flocks are enrolled in Texas Poultry Federation's avian influenza monitoring program.
- Flea market or bird sale owners or managers do not need to register, unless they also are a vendor of birds within the establishment. (Individuals who sell birds at the site must register or obtain an exemption.)

Flock owners may request an individual review for exemption, provided their flock is enrolled in a program in which birds are routinely tested for pullorum-typhoid and avian influenza.

Registration details:

The annual registration fee for a seller shall be based on the maximum number of fowl, during the previous twelve (12) months, being owned or managed by the registrant at any one time:

1. \$35.00 for less than 100 fowl
2. \$125.00 for 100 - 499 fowl
3. \$250.00 for 500 - 999 fowl
4. \$400.00 for 1000 - 2,499 fowl
5. \$600.00 for 2,500 or more fowl
6. \$600 for any registrant whose flock does not reside in the State of Texas, except in cases where the out of state registrant provides the Commission an affidavit certifying a verified maximum flock size. The registration fee will be the same as the fee for Texas registrants with a corresponding flock size.

The annual certificate of registration fee for a distributor or transporter of fowl shall be \$600.00

The annual certificate of registration fee for a combination seller, distributor or transporter of fowl shall be \$800.00.

What to do after registering?

A key component for disease tracking or surveillance is good record keeping. Dealers must maintain and make available to the TAHC all records for two years on the sale, barter or exchange of domestic or exotic fowl. Information that must be collected includes:

- buyer's and seller's names and addresses
- any movement or health status documents
- transaction dates
- number, breed, sex and description of the birds

Individual identification devices, such as wing or leg bands, will not be required. The regulations also stipulate that fowl be kept in clean and sanitary conditions. Furthermore, registrants are to notify the TAHC of possible disease exposure or infections, which could include increased death loss or unusual signs of illness.

**For Fowl Registration Information and Registration Applications, contact:
Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) 1-800-550-8242, your local Region Office,
or by email at fowlregistration@tahc.state.tx.us**

Applications may be obtained from the TAHC website at, www.tahc.state.tx.us.

Mail completed application and fee to:

Texas Animal Health Commission

P.O. Box 12966-2966

Austin, TX. 78711

 **Facebook: www.facebook.com/TexasAHC**

 **Twitter: www.twitter.com/TAHC**