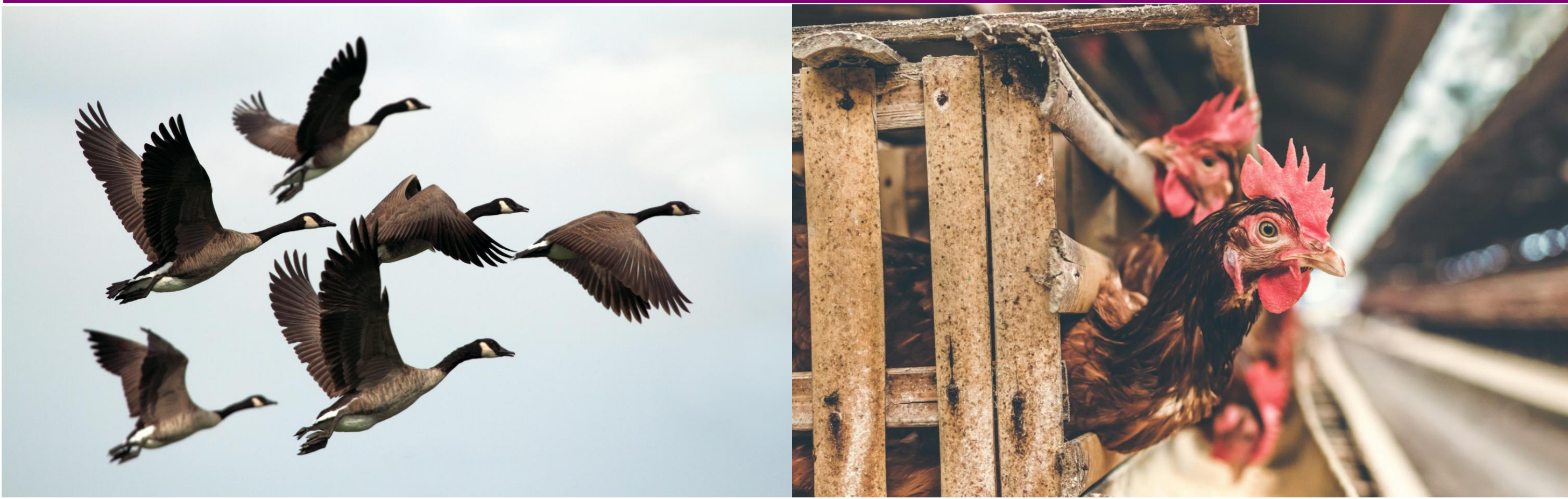


# Factors influencing the use of biosecurity on poultry farms in the UK: a qualitative study assessing the perspectives of different stakeholders

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## Background

- Adopting strong biosecurity measures on farms can help prevent the introduction and spread of diseases such as High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI).
- The United Kingdom (UK) has been re-emphasising the consistent use of good biosecurity measures to help reduce the widespread outbreaks of HPAI which have been occurring on poultry farms since 2020.
- However, research suggests that not all farmers use biosecurity in the same way, and that many factors can influence their biosecurity implementation.
- As part of the FluTrailMap research project, this study uses qualitative methods to understand the socio-ecological factors (including individual, interpersonal, community and societal factors) which impact the use of biosecurity on UK poultry farms, by speaking to different stakeholders in the poultry industry.

## Research question:

What socio-ecological factors influence biosecurity use in relation to disease prevention?

## Methods

One-to-one qualitative interviews are being conducted with various groups in the poultry industry, including:

Farmers

Poultry companies

Government

Veterinarians

Participants are based across England, Scotland and Wales and have been selected using a snowball sampling approach.

## Data analysis

Interview data is being analysed using a thematic analysis approach to generate codes, patterns and themes amongst the data, using NVivo 14.

## Preliminary findings – What factors impact biosecurity?

**Time & competing demands**

**Biosecurity fatigue**

**Level of compliance and risk perception**

**Speed of response**

**Financial constraints**

**Accessibility & accuracy of information**

Focus on other diseases and industry demands, along with the busy work schedule of farmers, may all impact the time taken to focus on biosecurity or HPAI.

Biosecurity has become a “repetitive” and “tiresome” topic for some, suggesting that individuals may not have the same motivation to follow preventative measures.

Biosecurity compliance reduces when the threat of disease is low. However, compliance across the industry has generally increased as outbreaks have started again, with people feeling better prepared.

Some participants believe that speedier responses from the government regarding biosecurity policies and HPAI prevention would be beneficial.

Where investments have been made, biosecurity has been strengthened across farms. However, there remain significant financial constraints for investment within the industry.

It is difficult to determine how effectively information is passed down to farmers, and the extent of engagement with content provided. Some information has also had mixed-messaging.

Providing **local agencies** with more **authority** to **implement** and **ensure** strong **biosecurity** compliance.

More focus on **pandemic** and **epidemic** preparedness

What do stakeholders recommend?



Further **support** from others in the industry, including **retailers** and **consumers**.

## Thinking ahead for the future

- Providing additional training and access to updated information around biosecurity for farmers, using a central or more accessible platform, would be beneficial.
- Structural factors being identified will require major system changes, highlighting the need for further discussion between companies and policy makers to improve the resilience of the industry while protecting public and animal health.

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