

# AG10

## COSHH essentials for farmers

# Clearing deep litter from poultry sheds

## Control approach 2 Engineering control



This information will help employers, the self-employed and contractors comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice using vehicles with a filtered air supply to the cab or, if that is not practicable, respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

It covers the key points you need to follow to help reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

See also sheet AG11, *Cleaning stores, sheds and silos*.

### Main points

- High dust levels can be produced during litter clearance.
- Keep exposure as low as possible using all the controls in this sheet.
- Health surveillance is usually needed - see sheet G402.

### Hazard

- ✓ Dust and spores produced from natural materials such as poultry dander and dry animal wastes can cause lung diseases. Spores are too small to see.
- ✓ Control exposure to stop occupational lung diseases developing - this means short-term as well as long-term exposure.
- ✓ If an individual develops occupational lung disease, avoid further exposure.

### Access and premises

- ✓ Only allow access to trained people. Keep everyone else away.

### Equipment and procedures

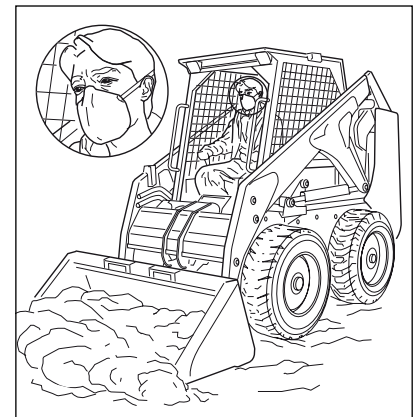
- ✓ Use low-dust materials for bedding - avoid sawdust. Can you damp down to reduce dust?
- ✓ Provide good general ventilation. Open all doors, ventilation grilles and turn on the extraction fans.
- ✓ Use a vehicle with air filtration fitted to the cab, including the following features:

- pre-filters, to protect the main HEPA filter;
- pressure gauges to show the system is working properly;
- alarms to sound when filters clog;
- overpressure above 10 Pa inside the cab to prevent dusty air ingress;
- flaps to release excess pressure;
- door seals - heavy-duty neoprene or other suitable material; and
- self-closing doors.

- ✓ Check that the clean air is turned on and working.
- ✓ Check any air conditioning self-test every time you use the vehicle.
- ✓ Keep doors and windows closed.
- ✓ If this is not possible, use respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

### Special care

- ✓ Consider immunising workers against tetanus.



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## Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE should not be needed if the harvester cab filters work properly.
- ✓ RPE is needed for maintenance and cleaning the machinery, or where you cannot avoid breathing in dust.
- ✓ Powered or air-fed RPE is more comfortable to wear.
- ✓ Select RPE that suits the wearer, the job and the work environment.
- ✓ Use RPE with an assigned protection factor (APF) of at least 20. See sheet R3.
- ✓ Disposable RPE, type FFP3, is acceptable. Don't use 'nuisance dust' masks.
- ✓ Make sure that RPE fits properly - get advice from your supplier or read the instructions on the box.
- ✓ Train workers to check their RPE works properly before use.
- ✓ Replace RPE filters as recommended by the supplier. Throw away disposable RPE at the end of the day, or sooner if heavily soiled.
- ✓ Keep RPE clean and store it away from dust.

### *Other protective equipment*

- ✓ Provide overalls that do not retain dust, eg smooth synthetic fabrics - not cotton or knitted.

## Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Plan regular checks and maintenance of the critical parts.
- ✓ Every day, look for signs of damage, eg door and window seals. Repair damage immediately.
- ✓ Check pre-filters regularly - keep spares.
- ✓ Check that the filter seating is in good condition.
- ✓ Change inlet air HEPA filters as advised by the manufacturer, but at least after every 250 hours' use.
- ✓ Get a competent ventilation engineer to examine the air filtration regularly.
- ✓ Examine and test non-disposable RPE thoroughly at least once every three months.
- ✓ Keep records of all examinations and tests for at least five years.
- ✓ Review records - failure patterns show where preventive maintenance is needed.

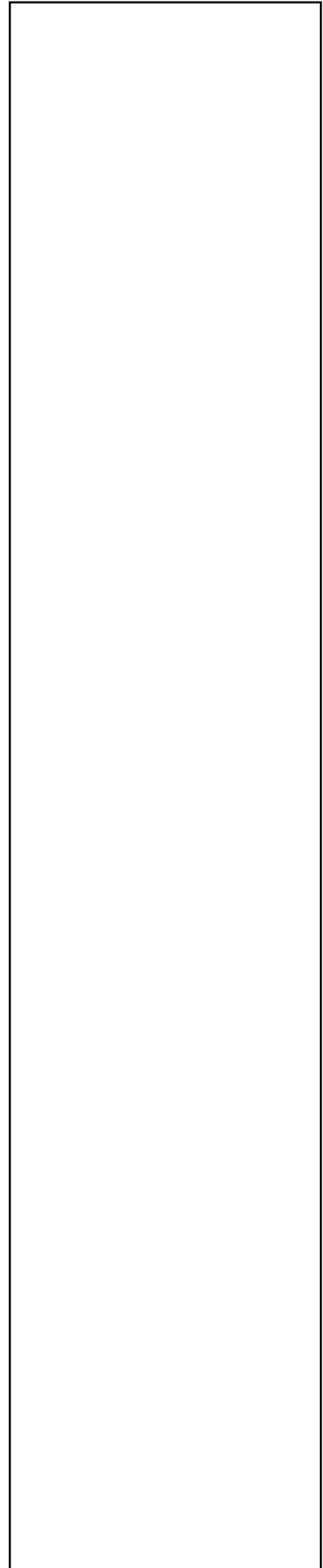
## Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean the cab after each use. Use a Type H vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA filter, or wet clean.

**Caution: Don't use a brush or compressed air, and never use compressed air to remove dust from clothing.**

## Health surveillance

- ✓ There is a chance of asthma developing, even with good controls in place. Use health surveillance - see Sheet G402.
- ✓ Ask an occupational physician for advice - see 'Useful links'



### Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers that dusts can cause lung diseases including asthma. Show them this sheet.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet AG0.
- ✓ Ensure that health surveillance is carried out on everyone that needs it.

### Further information

- *Preventing asthma at work. How to control respiratory sensitisers* L55 HSE Books 1994 ISBN 0 7176 0661 9
- *Common zoonoses in agriculture* Agriculture Information Sheet AIS2(rev2) HSE Books 2000
- See [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/agindex.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/agindex.htm) for other advice on health and safety risks in agriculture.

### Useful links

- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk).
- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com).
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at [www.bohs.org](http://www.bohs.org) for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.

<b>Employee checklist</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the extraction fans turned on?
<input type="checkbox"/> Shut cab doors and windows.
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the air filter working properly?
<input type="checkbox"/> If using RPE, is it working properly?
<input type="checkbox"/> Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage.
<input type="checkbox"/> If you find any problems, get them fixed. Don't just carry on working.
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-operate with health surveillance.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.