

This fact sheet outlines a range of land use planning considerations relevant to the establishment, expansion or modification of poultry farms in Western Australia.

This fact sheet has been prepared to assist planners implement [State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning](#).

What is a poultry farm?

Poultry farms are premises (land and/or buildings) used for the rearing or keeping of poultry for either egg or meat production for sale or consumption. Poultry includes chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese. Chickens are the most common.

Types of poultry farms

Commercial poultry farms are usually intensive, highly mechanised operations. They do not include hatcheries. The two main commercial poultry enterprises are egg (layer) production and meat (broiler) production.

Layer Farms

Caged	Hens are kept in cages within an environmentally controlled shed.
Barn	Hens can move around inside an environmentally controlled shed.
Free to range	Hens are able to go outside of the shed.

Broiler Farms

Conventional	Hens are raised in barns/sheds on litter with no access to an outdoor range.
Free to range	Paddock based with moveable laying sheds or barn based with access to an outdoor range.
Certified organic	Similar to free to range, but feed is from certified organic ingredients. Birds cannot be treated with routine vaccination unless treatment is required by law or for a disease that cannot be controlled with organic management practices.

Design and operations

A poultry farm includes:

- infrastructure for housing and feeding poultry;
- transport of animals to and from the site;
- transport, handling and disposal of animal feed and waste on or off-site; and
- handling and disposal of deceased or 'retired' animals on or off-site.

Information on sheds and associated infrastructure can be found in [Environmental Code of Practice for Poultry Farms \(2004\)](#) and [National Environmental Management System for the Meat Chicken Industry Version 2 \(2014\)](#).

Planning context

Scale of the proposal: The scale of a proposal is a critical factor in considering matters such as:

- the distance necessary to manage impacts on sensitive land uses;
- whether waste management arrangements are suitable;
- potential visual impacts;
- management of odour, dust and noise; and
- the extent of conditions required to manage potential impacts.

Access to water: Poultry farms require water for drinking supplies, shed cooling, shed sanitisation, fire protection, irrigation of landscaping and domestic use.

Vehicle access: Vehicle movements to and from the farm need to be considered, including:

- the location and design of access roads so that vehicle movements (including pick up and deliveries of feed, birds and waste, and associated farm practices) can be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to nearby land uses;
- the volume and type of vehicles accessing the premises each day (including delivery of new birds, feed and bedding, and collection of dead birds); and
- potential impact on the local road network in terms of vehicle volume and size.

Visual impacts: Potential visual impacts can be managed by:

- using building materials that are sympathetic to the local landscape character and environment;
- siting sheds and farm infrastructure to take best advantage of local topography; and
- utilising existing or planted vegetation as a screen.

Buffers: Poultry farms may emit odour, dust, noise and light. The need for buffers and management of impacts depends on the design and operational approach taken.

Use of new technology, careful site planning and contemporary management techniques may allow substantial reductions to buffer distances prescribed in Government policy and industry standards. Strategies include:

- vegetation screening and landscaping;
- optimal shed location, building materials and shed design;
- off-site composting; and
- mechanised approaches to shed ventilation, climate control and cleaning.

Buffers are also required to protect water quality in nearby waterways and wetlands. The buffer size will depend on the design and layout of the premises, the risk of water contamination, and the technology and management measures used to protect the waterway or wetland.

Further information on how to determine a buffer can be found in [State Planning Policy 2.5: Rural Planning](#).

Waste management: The management of unwanted eggs, dead birds, manure, spent litter and wastewater are key waste management issues. A key aim is to reduce the spread of disease. The following matters should be considered:

- the method for disposing of dead birds (e.g. off-site or on-site composting, off-site or on-site disposal);
- the method of removing manure and litter from sheds and disposing of manure off-site or on-site;
- the off-site location where vehicles can park to collect eggs or dead birds for off-site disposal;
- the location of a cool room where dead birds and unwanted eggs can be stored for over 24 hours before collection for off-site disposal;
- the location and storage of a weather and vermin proof receptacle for transporting unwanted eggs and dead birds (e.g. a 240 litre wheelie bin); and
- the route to be taken by vehicles collecting unwanted eggs or dead birds for disposal.

Bio-security: Biosecurity is the protection of the farm from biological contaminants such as pest or disease organisms. Disease can be spread through a number of means including feral or domestic animals, people, vehicles, equipment, water supply and dust.

Although planners do not need to have detailed knowledge of biosecurity matters they should be aware that biosecurity is affected by:

- the location of other poultry farms or poultry developments (such as hatcheries or layer facilities), which may constrain future expansion of the farm due to biosecurity;

- the location of, and distance from, water bodies and wetlands;
- the design and location of buildings and fencing to prevent access by native or feral animals; and
- the location for the burial of birds on the site. Advice from the Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) should be sought regarding any on-site burial.

Management plans: A management plan should accompany all poultry farm applications. Applicants need to demonstrate effective waste management practice detailing waste quantities produced, the method of treatment, recycling and disposal.

Environmental licensing and works approval: Under sections 52 and 53 of the [Environmental Protection Act 1986](#) a works approval is required for construction of prescribed premises or carrying out certain work on existing prescribed premises. Prescribed premises require a licence or registration if they cause emissions.

Poultry farms are not listed as a prescribed premise in [Schedule 1](#) of the [Environmental Protection Regulations 1987](#). However some associated operations (e.g. composting manure) may be prescribed and require authorisation under Part 3 Division 2 of the [Environmental Protection Act 1986](#).

As outlined in its [Guidance Statement: Land Use Planning](#), it is DER's policy to assess applications under Part V Division 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 concurrently with applications for planning approval and to make a determination once relevant planning decisions have been made.