

Laser prevents spread of bird flu

Lasers keep wild birds away from poultry farms, thereby preventing the transmission of bird flu, a study by Wageningen Bioveterinary Research shows.

Migrating birds can spread the bird flu virus through their excrement. It was already known that laser beams can keep wild birds away from airfields and rubbish tips. Last winter, the Wageningen research institute installed a laser on a mast in the chicken run of a laying hen farm. In the evening and at night, the laser shone on the chicken run, while during the day it also lit up the surrounding fields.

Camera images showed that when the laser was not there, wild birds regularly visited the chicken run, especially at night. They foraged for food and swam in pools. The next day, the hens drank from the pools. Bird flu can be transmitted to the chickens by this route. The laser prevented visits by wild birds to the chicken run almost entirely (99.7 per cent). The sweeping laser also kept the surrounding fields clear. A permit is required for the use of lasers.

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