



## **Histomoniasis “Blackhead” Prevention Checklist**

It is recommended to read the summary, provided by the BC Ministry of Agriculture, entitled “*Blackhead (Histomoniasis) in Turkeys*” (located on CPC website under “Disease Profiles”) to better understand the disease and its lifecycle. This brief summary will help clarify why each of the prevention and control points listed below are so important.

Unfortunately there are no drugs available for the treatment of Histomoniasis, which makes disease prevention absolutely critical. Recently, the only approved drug (Histostat) for the prevention of Histomoniasis has been removed from the market. This means that the only way to prevent this disease is to ensure turkeys are not exposed to the disease-causing organism, *Histomonas meleagridis*. This will rely solely on management/biosecurity and will require a multilayered approach. Strict adherence to the checklist below will significantly minimize the risk of disease due to Histomoniasis on your farm.

- House turkeys inside on a concrete floor
- Do not house turkeys in a barn that was previously occupied by chickens
- Do not grow chickens on the same farm
- Have an effective de-worming program to eliminate/reduce cecal worm populations
  - Talk to your veterinarian and feed company
- Routinely submit fecal samples for analysis to look for parasites
  - Talk to your veterinarian, animal health lab
- Ensure that no water from outside the barn can make its way into the barn (even tiny amounts!)
  - Ensure barn is properly sealed (any small amounts of moisture/water from outside can potentially result in disease)
- ALWAYS practice excellent biosecurity to ensure parasites (and other pathogens!) are not brought inside the barn from the outside environment or from other barns. Manure/dirt contaminated equipment and shoes are very high risk even at microscopic levels. Ensure the following biosecurity points are followed:
  - **Lockable farm gates**
  - **Biosecurity sign**
  - **Maintain driveways (gravel or paved) to prevent puddles**
  - **Vehicle disinfection station**
  - **Designated parking for visitors & employees with strict traffic protocols**
  - **Lock barn doors when barn is unattended**
  - **Maintain an accurate visitor log book & ensure only necessary personnel have access to the farm**
  - **Always wear dedicated clothing and boots in the barn (rubber boots for every barn!)**
  - **Wash hands before entering and after exiting the barn**
  - **Ensure a proper pest control program is in place**
  - **Ensure pets, wild birds and wildlife never gain access to the barn**
  - **Ensure feed storage and delivery systems are water-tight**
  - **Regularly clean & disinfect water lines, maintain filters and sample water quality routinely**
  - **Thoroughly clean and disinfect the barn between flocks, do not share equipment/tractors**
  - **Remove mortality from the barn in a timely manner and ensure proper protocols for disposal are followed (incineration is preferred)**
  - **Contact your Veterinarian if your flock experiences any unusual mortality or clinical signs**