

# “Poultry farmers need to be aware of the risks they run when they work with hazardous substances”

Keeping the houses clean and cleaning and disinfecting thoroughly are essential at any poultry farm. They prevent germs and keep the animals healthy. But the disinfectants and pesticides used for this are not always so innocent. How do you use them safely? And what are your obligations when using such products? Iris Van Dosselaer, content manager at Experimental Poultry Centre, and Rene Martens from disinfecting company Hyvarki explain.

Plant protection products are widely known in the agricultural sector. Examples are insecticides, fungicides and herbicides. They protect plants against harmful organisms or fight weeds. Biocides are also used to deal with unwanted organisms, but they are not intended to protect plants. Examples are cleaning products and disinfectants, mouse and rat poison, wood preservatives, insect repellents, etcetera. Together with plant protection products, biocides fall under the category of pesticides.

Some biocides pose a high risk to your health. They can cause irritation or be corrosive or toxic. They belong to the ‘closed circuit’ and are mainly reserved for professional users.

## Soaking the house

Iris Van Dosselaer, content manager at Experimental Poultry Centre, the provincial practice centre for poultry farmers: “At a poultry farm, closed circuit biocides can be used, for instance, to clean and disinfect the houses. This is done after each production cycle. The poultry farmer first removes the manure and then soaks the house with water or with a foaming degreasing agent. The natural or chemical substances he uses for this can be biocides. Then he cleans the house with water and possibly soap and lets it dry.”



“As we spray these hazardous substances in the house, it is crucial that we protect ourselves well”

RENE MARTENS, HYVARKI

## Spraying

After that, the house is disinfected. Most poultry farmers use a service company for this. Rene Martens from disinfection company Hyvarki: “We are often hired by poultry farms for a thorough disinfection of the house. For this we use closed circuit biocides, which are irritating and toxic. As we spray these hazardous substances in the house, it is crucial that we protect ourselves well, both while preparing the products and during spraying itself.”

Iris Van Dosselaer: “Afterwards, we check whether the cleaning and disinfection of the house have been done thoroughly. We do this by means of a hygiene assessment, in which general bacterial growth is tested.”



**“At the practice centre, gloves, safety goggles, a mouth mask and protective clothing form part of the standard equipment”**

IRIS VAN DOSSELAER, CONTENT MANAGER  
AT EXPERIMENTAL POULTRY CENTRE

## Mandatory registration

If you want to use a closed circuit biocide, you have to register as a professional user at [www.biocide.be](http://www.biocide.be), and confirm your status each year. “The practice centre is registered as a professional user of closed circuit biocides. We monitor legislation closely,” Iris Van Dosselaer confirms.

For poultry farms it is not always so clear whether they are using closed circuit biocides and who exactly is under the duty to register. “If, as a poultry farmer, you carry out the cleaning or disinfection of the houses yourself and you buy closed circuit biocides to do so, you are under the duty to register,” Rene Martens clarifies. “If an external service company buys the products needed for cleaning or disinfection, they are the ones that have to register.”

The list of authorised biocides can be found on the website [www.biocide.be](http://www.biocide.be). This also clearly indicates which biocides belong to the closed circuit and which ones do not.

## The label will tell

“Poultry farmers are not always fully aware of the risks they run when they work with hazardous substances,” Iris Van Dosselaer says. “The hazards and risks vary greatly between products. The hazard symbols on the label provide a first indication. Be sure to also check the safety data sheet. There, you will find extensive information, for instance whether the product is dangerous when it is inhaled or spilled, and what protective measures you need to take.

At the same time, it is also important that the biocides are only used for the applications for which they are authorised. These applications are mentioned in the authorisation act of the product or possibly in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC), both of which can be found in the list of authorised biocides at [www.biocide.be](http://www.biocide.be).

“At the practice centre, gloves, safety goggles, a mouth mask and protective clothing form part of the standard equipment for anyone working with hazardous substances. At most poultry farms the use of gloves is widespread, but sometimes poultry farmers wear work gloves that offer insufficient protection from corrosive substances. They need to get informed and protect themselves when working with biocides.”

## The FPS Public Health informs

Want to know more about the safe use of biocides, the risks involved or the registration duty? You can find plenty of information on [www.biocide.be](http://www.biocide.be).

There, you can also find a brochure and a safety card adapted to the poultry sector:

- **Biocides in the poultry sector. What do you need to know as a professional user?**
- **Be careful with biocides. Recognise them and protect yourself!**



**BIOCIDES?**  
I use them with  
the necessary  
caution

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