

# Terminology Related to Poultry Disease

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## Salient Terminology

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- **Acute:** An acute disease typically involves a sudden onset of severe clinical signs and death (in contrast with a chronic illness, which involves long-term or recurrent symptoms).
- **Chronic:** A chronic disease generally progresses slowly and/or involves long-term or recurrent symptoms (in contrast with an acute illness, which involves a sudden onset of symptoms).
- **Contagious:** A contagious disease spreads rapidly from one individual to another (in contrast with a noncontagious disease, which does not spread easily).
- **Infectious:** Infectious diseases are caused by organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites, that infect, or invade, another organism and cause disease.
- **Morbidity:** The term *morbidity* refers to the number of birds within a given flock that are affected by a certain condition or disease (disease prevalence within a population) and that need to be culled— for health reasons such as leg problems or other clinical signs of disease— as a result.
- **Mortality:** The term *mortality* refers to the number of birds that die from an illness within a given flock.
- **Noncontagious:** A noncontagious disease typically does not spread easily from individual to individual (in contrast with a contagious disease, which spreads easily).
- **Noninfectious:** Noninfectious diseases are caused by nonliving agents such as poisons, mycotoxins, and nutritional deficits.
- **Poultry:** The term *poultry* refers to chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, quail, pheasants, pigeon, guinea fowl, pea fowl, ostrich, emu, and rhea.