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Official Statement from Universal Ostrich Farms Inc., May 21, 2025



MAY 21, 2025



PRESS RELEASES



While questions are always welcome, imagine the progress we would all make if every citizen held the government to this same level of scrutiny. What is the goal here? To save healthy animals from an inhumane and unjustified death.

Our shared mission is simple and powerful: to protect healthy animals, and ultimately people, from an unnecessary, inhumane fate. Let's rise above the noise of accusations and focus on the real questions that deserve thoughtful answers. Farmers are juggling biosecurity measures, animal care, community concerns and so much more — this isn't about avoiding hard conversations, it's about supporting those who work tirelessly as farmers and for what is right.

If you read something you are not sure of or need clarification, please first refer to this living document at SaveOurOstriches.com. If questions still linger, feel free to email SaveOurOstriches@gmail.com before sharing possibly inaccurate information.

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Asking questions is much more productive than sharing unverified and misunderstood portions of information. Please consider that sharing false information and statements can be considered defamation, will damage the farm's reputation and increase our farm's exposure to harm.

When we choose collaboration over conflict we are stopping 'shaking the ants' actions, and instead forging a stronger, kinder and united future for our animals, farmers, and community.

Official Statement from Universal Ostrich Farms Inc.

May 21, 2025

Background

For over 30 years, business partners Karen Espersen and Dave Bilinski have upheld the highest standards in animal welfare and scientific integrity. Below, we clarify our history, practices, and recent challenges to address misinformation and affirm our dedication to transparency.

Founding and Operations: Incorporated in 2001, Universal Ostrich Farms Inc., led by Karen Espersen and Dave Bilinski, has ethically raised ostriches for three decades with a focus on ethical breeding and care.

Struthio Bioscience Inc: Launched in May 2022, this

division partnered with Dr. Isukamoto of Kyoto University to develop and purify ostrich-derived antibodies (IgY) for research and therapeutic applications.

Mission: To advance sustainable farming and contribute to scientific progress through safe, non-invasive antibody production.

Antigen Research vs. Vaccination

Antigen Exposure: In our projects we used only non-infectious antigens to stimulate antibody production in laying hens' egg yolks while doing research. This is a standard process that is being used in natural avian antibody production. These fragments cannot cause disease. Antibodies are safely harvested from egg yolks without harming the birds.

Terminology Clarified:

- **Inoculation** — The deliberate **introduction of a pure antigen** (by injection or any way of entry to the body), without any additional substances, to induce immunity and antibody production.
- **Antigen exposure** — Is not a vaccine. It uses non-infectious fragments to prime immunity.
- **Vaccination** — The process of administration of a **vaccine**.
- **Vaccine** — A substance that contains disease causing preparation of killed, weakened, or part of a microorganism, as well as adjuvants, preservatives, and chemicals, to stimulate the immune system to

protect against disease in the future.

- **Immunization** – The broad term for any process (natural or artificial) that readies the immune system to fight a potential invader. It represents both vaccination and inoculation processes.

Safety: Our antigen exposure process is distinct from vaccination, using ostriches' natural immune systems. We do NOT produce antibodies with live viruses or mRNA.

Farm Operations and Health History

Current Focus: Since 2020, we have focused on breeding, antibody research, and supporting new farmers that want to get into the agriculture industry. Meat processing ceased in the summer of 2019.

2020 Pseudomonas Outbreak: In March 2020, a diagnosis of Pseudomonas bacterial infection confirmed by a lab and veterinarian, affected $\approx 3\%$ of birds (10 birds total) with survivors developing natural and eventual herd immunity. No further outbreaks or disease occurred until December 2024.

Bird Sales: In June 2021, six birds (neither injected with antigens nor offspring of injected hens) were sold for breeding, not food, as breeders are too valuable for slaughter. No injected birds entered the food chain.

COVID-19 Antibody Research (2020–2021)

Collaboration: Periods in April to October in both 2020 and 2021, we contracted out Immune BioSolutions for them to provide an antigen, which has been historically given to chickens, and to extract and purify the Universal Ostrich Farm antibodies under regular common non-disclosure confidentiality clauses on COVID-19 antibody research. Separately, Immune BioSolutions received a \$13.44 Million grant from the Canadian government for their own work. Universal Ostrich Farms and Struthio BioScience did not receive any payment, funding or benefit from Immune BioSolutions nor directly from the Government. Instead, the farm's contract was abruptly terminated, without any reason presented to the farm.

Antigen Use: Immune BioSolutions provided pre-tested antigens to stimulate antibodies in hens (not roosters). These were 98% effective at neutralizing antibodies against COVID-19 and its variants, with ostrich antibodies outperforming chicken antibodies by 30–40%.

Project Termination: The contract with the farm abruptly halted as mentioned above, with no reasons provided. Immune BioSolutions retained some of the farm's most effective antibodies. Again, no payments came to the farm from Immune BioSolutions.

Japanese Research

Japanese Collaboration: Unrelated to Universal Ostrich Farm, Dr. Tsukamoto, a Japanese government-funded Kyoto University president, tested Covid-19 antibody-infused mask liners in Japan. This was Tsukamoto's OWN research with his own ostriches, as he has his own farm. He offered H5N1 antibodies to the Canadian government in 2025,

receiving no response. Universal Ostrich Farm **did not produce or sell masks** and have no ties to the World Economic Forum (WEF). What, if any, affiliations that Dr. Tsukamoto may have with WEF is unknown to us and our farm.

December 2024— January 2025 Health Events

Initial Case: On December 10, 2024, a 3-year-old ostrich hen developed pneumonia-like symptoms, presenting the same symptoms as 2020 (see above). This hen was treated using the same protocols prescribed by the vet in 2020. The hen fully recovered and is alive and well today.

Outbreak: From December 14, 2024, to January 14, 2025, 69 young male and female breeders died, most of them under four years old. These young breeders were born or acquired after 2020, therefore they were lacking the 2020 *Pseudomonas* immunity. The 69 died over 31 days (~2/day). Each sick bird was immediately quarantined and many recovered with treatments.

Distinction from HPAI: Unlike High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), which is said to kill entire avian flocks in 24 hours, this farm's illness resulted in only approximately 15% of deaths which occurred over 31 days as it slowly ran its course until reaching full herd immunity on January 14th. According to CFIA lab documents, this illness involves a new hybrid of Low Pathogenic (LPAI) and High Pathogenic (HPAI) Avian Influenza, confirmed by PCR

testing done by CFIA, in their internal and self-regulated labs. The LPAI portion of this hybrid is important in indicating that this illness is much less deadly, as per CFIA.

CFIA Testing and Cull Order

CFIA Involvement: Following an anonymous tip on December 28th , 2024, CFIA called the farm and agreed, based on symptoms, this did not sound like avian influenza. CFIA told the farm to call when they had 2 new carcasses available for testing. On December 29th , the farm called CFIA as there were 2 more deaths.

CFIA tested the two carcasses on December 30, 2024, with preliminary H5 results from an internal self-regulated CFIA/Ministry of Agriculture lab in Abbotsford, BC. A cull order was signed and issued 41 minutes after the PCR test results were known, before N1 confirmation from the Winnipeg internal self-regulated CFIA lab results were known on January 10, 2025.

No details of the testing, handling, and shipment of the test samples have been disclosed, even upon multiple requests by the farm. This chain of custody is normally provided to ensure proper procedures are followed to avoid flawed results. Additionally, CFIA orders state that NO testing, including third party testing can be done. In fact, the farm is under order that they cannot treat or test their own animals, which the farm normally does themselves.

Testing Restrictions: Independent “gold-standard” tissue testing and any other testing of any kind is prohibited, with threats of \$200,000 fines and/or six months in jail for

conducting our own tests, as per Health of Animals Act Section 66.b. Thus, only PCR testing was done by CFIA on two carcasses. It is commonly believed that PCR testing is limited and contradictory. PCR is not the gold standard testing method and is not recommended as a diagnostic tool.

Exemption and Rejection: A “rare genetics” exemption was promised by a CFIA officer in writing on January 2, 2025 but was rejected 8 days later, on January 10, In a CFIA “Distinct Unit Package” exemption request form. The farm was told if any answers were NO that they would immediately get denied an exemption. BUT, the form was intended for commercial poultry thus nothing on the form was relevant for a non-commercial Ostrich farm.

Legal Actions and Court Outcomes

Injunction: On January 31, 2025 Universal Ostrich farm won an injunction to pause a February 1 cull order, compelling CFIA to justify its decision via Judicial Review based limited to only data known from December 31, 2024, to January 10, 2025.

Judicial Review: On April 15–16, 2025, a Federal Court in Vancouver reviewed all evidence pertaining to the Notice to Dispose Order issued on December 31st, 2024 and the Exemption Denial dated January 10th, 2025. The Judgement and Reasons were posted on May 13, 2025, exactly 27 days after the hearing ended. Under administrative law, Justice Zinn’s hands were tied.

As Judge Zinn quoted in his decision in Paragraph 3:

“This is not an appeal. The Court is not stepping into the shoes of the Agency and making the decisions that the Court feels ought to have been made. Instead, the focus of the review is on the Agency’s reasoning and process.”

Continuing to Paragraph 5:

“Courts must respect Parliament’s choice to assign decision-making power to administrative bodies. This respect comes from the principle of separation of powers a cornerstone of Canadian public law”

The Judge couldn’t consider anything after January 10th , including the fact that Universal Ostrich Farm has had no illness or deaths since January 14, 2025.

As the Judge revealed, it was not within his power to determine what was right or wrong. The court’s rule was limited to whether the CFIA exercised their policies and acted within reasonable fairness. It is the CFIA’s policies that need to be challenged and changed, and that cannot be done in a judicial review. A separate action needs to be filed for this.

RDCK Statement: On May 15, 2025, supported by intense public pressure, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) voted unanimously that CFIA test all healthy ostriches before considering the 400 healthy carcasses weighing ~140,000 pounds, proposed for disposal at the RDCK Ootischenia Landfill near Castlegar, BC.

Current Status: Judge Zinn upheld CFIA’s narrow arguments allowing a potential cull of 400 ostriches despite their perfect health status with no illness or deaths for four months.

Compensation and Fines

Compensation Uncertainty: CFIA lists up to \$3,000 per poultry bird online as per a January 27, 2025, news release, but no ostrich-specific value is defined. No compensation communication has been received as of May 20, 2025, and \$3,000 per bird is far below their true value. The ongoing market value of an ostrich rooster is \$7500 CDN each. The value of an antibody-producing hen is \$93,000 CDN each. Compensation can be voided by CFIA as per below. Worth noting, are you are aware, that us all, as taxpayers pay for all CFIA actions, wages and costs. This includes all culling processes, compensation to farmers, court, travel, etc.

Fines: Two unjustified \$10,000 fines threaten to eliminate any compensation. Both fines were challenged and documents filed to CFIA. We are working to have these overturned. CFIA told a reporter that compensation is only when farms are compliant — taking them to court is far from compliant.

Commitment to Transparency

Universal Ostrich Farms Inc. remains dedicated to ethical farming, rigorous science, and public safety. Our antibody research has shown immense potential, yet we face significant challenges from regulatory overreach and misinformation. We call for fair, science-based assessments and urge citizens to hold authorities accountable with the

same scrutiny. For further inquiries, contact Universal Ostrich Farms Inc. or SaveOurOstriches.com directly.

Signed,

Karen Espersen & Dave Bilinski

Universal Ostrich Farms Inc.

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Universal Ostrich Farms, a small remote farm in the beautiful Kootenays of British Columbia, has been ordered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to cull their entire herd of 400 healthy ostriches—animals they have raised for over 30 years.



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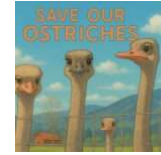
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