



Producer Information Sheet

Attention Poultry Owners: Avian Influenza Response Activities in Your Area

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and State animal health officials are investigating a confirmed case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 in your area. This virus can have a high death rate in birds—as high as 100 percent—and can spread rapidly from flock to flock. Anyone who owns poultry needs to be aware of this disease and how we are responding. There are specific steps you can take to help protect your poultry.

Avian Influenza Basics

Avian influenza is a viral disease that can infect wild birds (such as ducks, gulls, and shorebirds) and domestic poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese). There are influenza viruses that mainly affect birds, and other influenza viruses that affect people—and, as with people, some forms of influenza (or the flu) are worse than others. HPAI is deadly to domestic poultry, but wild birds can carry HPAI viruses without appearing sick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk to people from the HPAI H5 infections currently found in the United States to be low. No human cases of these HPAI H5 viruses have been detected in the United States, Canada, or internationally.

These HPAI viruses are not a food safety concern. However, the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F kills bacteria and viruses.

How We Are Responding

Animal health officials quarantined the affected farm and will depopulate the affected flock to contain the disease. We will ensure the farm is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before it can house poultry again.

To make sure the disease has not spread, we are collecting and testing saliva samples from birds living within a certain distance of the affected flock. We may be contacting you and asking if we can collect swab samples from some of your birds to test for infection as part of this effort. Taking the samples will not hurt or harm your birds.

State animal health officials will likely establish quarantine zones or use movement restrictions around the affected farm while we are working through this process. Please follow the guidance of animal health officials. The goal is to protect bird health. As soon as these restrictions can safely be removed, we will notify impacted producers and other bird owners.

What You Can Do

One of the most important things you can do to protect your birds is to follow good biosecurity. If you see signs of illness in your birds, report it immediately. Together, these actions will help keep HPAI from infecting new flocks.

Here are six simple steps for good biosecurity:

- 1) Restrict access to your property and keep your birds away from other birds, including wild birds.
- 2) Before and after working with your birds, wash your hands thoroughly. Clean and disinfect equipment. Wear clean clothes and scrub your shoes with disinfectant.
- 3) Buy birds from reputable sources and keep new birds separated from your other birds for at least 30 days.
- 4) Do not share equipment or supplies with neighbors or other bird owners. If you must borrow items, clean and disinfect them before bringing them home.
- 5) Early detection can help prevent the spread of disease. Check your birds frequently for signs of illness. If you find a sick or dead bird, don't touch it.
- 6) Don't wait. If your birds are sick or dying, contact animal health officials.

Watch for these signs of illness:

- Sudden increase in bird deaths in your flock
- Sneezing, gasping for air, coughing, and nasal discharge
- Watery and green diarrhea
- Lack of energy and poor appetite
- Drop in egg production or soft- or thin-shelled, misshapen eggs
- Swelling around the eyes, neck, and head
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, comb, and legs

If you have sick or dying birds, please report them to your State Veterinarian or USDA right away!

USDA: 1-866-536-7593

State: 320-214-6700, ext. 3804

For more information about the current avian influenza situation, visit www.aphis.usda.gov. To learn more about biosecurity and find helpful resources on that topic, go to <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.