

Avian influenza 2015

Like people, birds commonly get the flu. Avian influenza (AI) is a viral disease that impacts many types of birds, wild and domestic. This also includes the poultry and turkeys going to fairs/exhibitions throughout the year. In birds, most strains of the virus are mild. Although rare, some influenza types can be transmitted to humans. **Avian influenza is not a food safety concern.**

For decades, AI has been documented in domestic poultry and wild waterfowl at low levels in the United States. Since December 2014, there has been an event with multiple cases of highly pathogenic AI occurring in multiple areas of the United States. This type of AI causes high death loss in domestic birds. It has now been identified in domestic poultry in five western states, five mid-western states (Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas and Arkansas) and in the province of Ontario, Canada. For more information go to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>, click on animal health, then animal disease information, and then AI.

It's important poultry owners practice good biosecurity, including restricting access to your birds and not sharing equipment. Discovering AI early will help prevent further spread of the disease.

It is very important to be observing your birds for any signs of AI:

- Sudden death
- Neurologic signs (difficulty walking, torticollis-twisted neck)
- Lack of appetite and energy
- Significant drop in egg production
- Swollen comb, wattles, legs, head
- Nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing
- Bloody diarrhea

Fairs are encouraged to participate in MDARD AI testing this summer. For more information, please contact MDARD at 1-800-292-3939.



If you suspect avian influenza, please contact the State Veterinarian's office:

1-800-292-3939 (daytime)

517-373-0440 (emergencies only)



*A chicken with signs of respiratory illness.
Source: Dr. Larry Granger 2002*



*Two sick chickens, the chicken on the right is displaying torticollis-twisted neck.
Source: Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky*