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A quick review of avian influenza reports from western North America – British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, and Utah – shows veterinary and public health authorities on high alert. There's heightened awareness among bird watchers, hunters, and backyard flock keepers, too. Is the greater vigilance overall and biosecurity by poultry producers paying off?

As yet, no commercial poultry have been infected in the U.S., although highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses have been isolated from waterfowl and wild birds. These birds are likely to be the major vectors spreading HPAI to different localities and regions in their feces. Then other animals or people can spread HPAI to commercial poultry flocks.

Only a few virus organisms (10 to 100) are needed to infect chickens or turkeys, so only very small amounts of fecal material are needed to transmit the infection. Very strict biosecurity measures are needed to avoid the introduction of contaminated feces.

Federal and state veterinary and public health officials point out that the avian influenza strains involved have not been implicated in any human infection to date. Nonetheless, as a result of the isolation of HPAI in the U.S., some countries are banning any importation of U.S. poultry.

Here are several recent articles describing what is happening in regard to HPAI in western Canada, the U.S. and beyond:

In the News

Vigilance and biosecurity paying off?



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- British Columbia – The H5N2 outbreak is reported to be contained as it has been more than 3 weeks since the last case. [More](#)
- Washington – Backyard flocks are affected. [More](#)
- Oregon – Other than the backyard flock in southwest Oregon in December, no other cases of H5N8 have been reported. [More](#)
- Utah – A widgeon tested positive for H5N8 with authorities testing other waterfowl brought down by hunters. [More](#)
- Worldwide – 2015 is already a busy year keeping track of HPAI on a global basis. [More](#)
- International trade – Because of HPAI, China bans imports of all U.S. poultry and eggs. [More](#)

The takeaway: Infected migratory waterfowl overflying or landing in areas with high concentrations of backyard poultry – especially in mixed farm settings with open surface water – represent high risk for spread of HPAI with negative consequences for poultry industries, especially those with export business.



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