

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak in U.S.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N2 & H5N8 in several different types of poultry in the Central flyway in Missouri, Arkansas, Minnesota, and Kansas and in the Pacific flyway in California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. CDC considers the risk to people from these HPAI H5 infections in wild birds, backyard flocks and commercial poultry, to be low. These infections are not considered to be a threat to public health or the food supply. No human infections with the virus have been detected at this time.

There are currently no cases of HPAI in Colorado. However, we are asking you to inform poultry producers and bird owners about HPAI and advise them to increase biosecurity to help prevent HPAI from occurring in Colorado. Wild birds appear to be the vector for HPAI infection of domestic poultry; therefore it is especially important to limit any direct exposure of poultry to wildlife or indirect exposure of poultry to wildlife/wildlife areas through people who have had contact with both. Additionally, it is vital to submit sick and dead birds to CSU's veterinary diagnostic lab for HPAI testing. If you have sick birds or birds that have died from unknown causes, help is available at the Colorado Avian Health Call Line at CSU, their number is 970-297-4008. To report multiple sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials, either through the Colorado State Veterinarian's Office at 303-869-9130 or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

Although vaccines are available, they are not commonly used because no vaccine covers all strains of the disease. Disease prevention practices and good biosecurity are the best way to prevent HPAI. All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard enthusiasts, should review their biosecurity practices, prevent contact between their birds and wild birds, and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths. HPAI virus strains can travel in wild birds without them appearing sick. People should avoid contact with sick/dead poultry or wildlife. If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds.

Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks can be found at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>

As part of existing avian health programs and avian influenza (AI) response plans, federal and state partners are working jointly on AI surveillance and testing in Colorado. The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, and federal and state animal health officials are working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets, backyard flocks, and in migratory wild bird populations.

USDA is working with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and also continues to communicate with trading partners to encourage adherence to OIE standards and minimize trade impacts due to HPAI. OIE trade guidelines call on countries to base trade restrictions on sound science and limit restrictions to those animals and animal products within a defined region that pose a risk of spreading HPAI.