



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE**

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## **Animal Health Advisory January 8, 2020**

### **Be aware of the threat: Infectious Coryza (*Avibacterium paragallinarum*)**

#### **Overview**

One commercial broiler farm has tested positive for Infectious Coryza, a poultry disease caused by the bacteria *Avibacterium paragallinarum*. This disease does not affect humans. The disease, commonly known as “Coryza” (pronounced core-eye-za) was first detected on the Delmarva Peninsula in backyard flocks during the Summer of 2019, and in commercial layers in Fall of 2019 - but is not a new disease. Coryza is currently found in poultry in several regions of the United States and has been around for many years. Because the disease is new to Delmarva, it is important for poultry growers to understand the basics on how the disease is spread, how to prevent getting the disease in your flock, and how to identify it in your poultry.

Delaware has over 750 producers who raise commercial broiler chickens and more than 1,500 small backyard, non-commercial poultry owners. Delaware also has three commercial egg laying facilities.

**Commercial broiler growers** should communicate with their service person if they have concerns or questions about Coryza.

**Small poultry owners** should communicate with their veterinarians if they observe sick poultry so that a diagnosis can be made. If you do not have a veterinarian, you can call the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) to report illness or death in your flock. You can call DDA at 302-698-4500 during business hours or use our after-hours emergency number: 302-233-1480.

To learn how to increase biosecurity to protect your small flock, visit this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2\\_jEtoY8jihSBEqHrAwoVCQ0QA86ZLt5](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2_jEtoY8jihSBEqHrAwoVCQ0QA86ZLt5)

[Healthy Harry biosecurity videos by USDA/APHIS/VS]

#### **One infected broiler farm in Delaware**

One broiler farm in Sussex County, Delaware experienced increased mortality during the first week of January 2020. Affected birds were taken to the University of Delaware’s Lasher Laboratory for examination and diagnostic testing. The test results indicated that the flock was infected with Coryza. The positive flock is scheduled to be processed this evening (January 8, 2020) using a route that avoids other broiler farms. Live

haul equipment will be cleaned and disinfected before traveling to another farm. The houses on the affected farm will windrow litter and extend the layout period to 28 days before introducing new birds.

### What are signs of Coryza in poultry?

- Clinical signs in broilers are variable but may include the following:
  - Respiratory disease with or without swelling of the head
  - High mortality in the absence of clear respiratory disease
  - Marked decrease in feed and/or water consumption
  - Nasal discharge
  - Eye inflammation
- Older birds in layer flocks or non-commercial flocks may see any of the following:
  - Facial swelling or swelling of the head
  - Conjunctivitis (eye redness)
  - Discharge from the eyes and nasal openings
  - Sneezing and coughing
  - Decreased feed intake and egg production

### How is Coryza spread?

The disease spreads when healthy birds come in contact with bodily fluids from sick birds. The bacteria that causes Coryza is shed in both manure and respiratory secretions. The bacteria can travel from farm to farm in litter or manure, farming materials or equipment, vehicles, and people who have picked up the bacteria on their clothing, shoes, or hands. Work crews and other visitors who do not change clothing between poultry farms are known to spread Coryza from infected farms to clean farms. Carcasses of dead poultry that are not properly composted can spread Coryza if infected carcasses are carried from farm to farm by animals such as raccoons, foxes, or feral cats.

### Protect your birds by taking a few simple steps. These include:

- Restrict traffic to essential visits.
- Be sure that all visitors follow your contracting company's biosecurity rules, especially those requirements for entry into the poultry house, e.g. proper foot-pan usage or PPE.
- Avoid visits to other poultry farms. If you must visit another poultry farm, be sure to change clothes and clean your hands and shoes before returning to your own farm.
- Dedicated farm clothing and boots: make sure you have a dedicated pair of farm boots and coveralls that are worn on your farm and which are not worn off the farm.
- Litter: do not allow manure from layer facilities to be spread in the vicinity of your poultry houses.
- Shared equipment: do not share equipment with other growers. If you must, ensure that the equipment is clean and free of manure before bringing it onto your farm.
- Shared services (fuel, shaving, deliveries): only essential servicemen should enter the poultry house. If they must enter the house, servicemen must wear disposable coveralls boots, and gloves.