



SITUATION UPDATE: 3/18/22

Delaware-Maryland Joint Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza on Delmarva

UPDATE

Federal laboratory testing has confirmed a highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza (HPAI) case in a commercial pullet flock located in Cecil County, Md. Following an investigation by the Delaware and Maryland Departments of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory has confirmed poultry from this farm has tested positive for highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza (HPAI).

Avian influenza is a highly contagious airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds through nasal and eye secretions and manure. The virus can be spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. This virus affects poultry, like chickens, ducks, turkeys, and wild bird species such as ducks, geese, shorebirds, and raptors.

BACKGROUND

This avian influenza detection follows previously announced cases on farms in New Castle and Kent counties in Delaware, and Cecil and Queen Anne's counties in Maryland. Following these cases, federal and state partners have greatly expanded their surveillance sampling and testing regimen to better protect the poultry industry on the Delmarva Peninsula.

State officials have quarantined all affected premises, and the birds have been depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. Birds from affected flocks will not enter the food system.

There is currently minimal risk to public health as there have been no human cases of HPAI in the United States. Avian influenza does not affect poultry meat or egg products, which remain safe to eat.

IF YOU HAVE SICK POULTRY

- Commercial poultry producers should follow the procedures of contacting the company they grow for when they notice signs of disease.
- Backyard flock owners who notice any of the signs of HPAI in their flock should contact:
 - In Delaware, email the Delaware Poultry Health Hotline at poultry.health@delaware.gov or call 302-698-4507 and provide your contact information, size of flock, location, and concerns.
 - In Maryland, report any unusual or sudden increases in sick birds to the MDA Animal Health Program at 410-841-5810. Commercial chicken growers and backyard flock owners can email questions about the outbreak to MD.Birdflu@maryland.gov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For all media requests, please email: JIC@delaware.gov

Due to biosecurity concerns, no on-site interviews, photos or videos are allowed. For more information on avian influenza, please visit de.gov/poultry or mda.maryland.gov/avianflu.