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MEMO

TO: Delaware Beekeepers

FROM: Michael T. Scuse, Secretary of Agriculture

DATE: March 11, 2022

RE: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Bee Colonies on Poultry Farms

Delmarva currently has four poultry farms affected by highly pathogenic (H5N1) avian influenza (HPAI) – two in New Castle County, Delaware, one in Cecil County, Maryland, and one in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland. Avian influenza is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among chickens through nasal and eye secretions, as well as manure. The virus can be spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by contact with wild birds and contaminated droppings, and through contact with infected poultry, equipment, and clothing and shoes of caretakers.

Due to the severity of HPAI, an affected poultry farm is quarantined if the disease is detected. This quarantine means nothing can move on or off the premises, including bee colonies. We ask all beekeepers who have hives on poultry farms to contact the farmer to set up a time to relocate your hives offsite. Due to the length of response activities necessary to eradicate HPAI, we do not want to jeopardize the health of your bees during a crucial production time as the weather begins to warm up.

To prevent spreading the virus to the farm where your hives are and other nearby farms, we ask that you take the following precautions:

- On the day of your agreed-upon pick-up, before you pick up your hives, take your vehicle to the car wash, including an undercarriage and tire cleaning.
- Wear disposable shoe covers while on the farm, keeping safety in mind.
- Before putting your feet into your car, Lysol the soles of your shoes.
- After relocating your hives to a location without poultry, revisit the car wash, cleaning both the undercarriage and tires.
- Wash your bee suit with hot water and soap.
- If you have hives on other poultry farms, you must wait 72 hours before visiting the next farm.

We appreciate your assistance in being proactive in protecting your bees and the poultry farms you work with on Delmarva. For more information on HPAI, please visit <https://de.gov/poultry>.