



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

SITUATION UPDATE: January 25, 2025

Delaware Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

UPDATE

A third commercial broiler flock in Kent County, Delaware, has tested presumptive positive for H5 avian influenza at the University of Delaware's Lasher Laboratory in Georgetown, part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. Additional samples have been sent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) for further confirmation.

The Delaware Department of Agriculture has quarantined the affected premises, and the birds on the property are being depopulated to prevent the spread of disease. Birds from the affected flock will not enter the food system.

In total, eight commercial poultry farms on Delmarva have been confirmed to have HPAI, including the three farms in Kent County, Delaware, four farms in Maryland (Caroline, Queen Anne's, and Dorchester counties), and one farm in Accomack County, Virginia. In late December 2024, Delaware announced presumptive positive results of H5 avian influenza in snow geese. Due to their aquatic roosting at night, where the virus can easily be spread among the flock, and their land-based foraging in open fields during the day, poultry both on commercial farms and backyard flocks are at high risk for contracting highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Note: All announcements and pertinent information regarding the HPAI situation in Delaware will be posted at <https://de.gov/poultry>. Situation updates will be issued for any new Kent County, Delaware cases.

IF YOU HAVE SICK POULTRY OR EXPERIENCE INCREASED MORTALITY

- Commercial poultry producers should notify the company they grow for when they notice signs of disease.
- Delaware backyard flock owners who notice any of the signs of HPAI in their flock should 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. Do not take dead or sick birds to a lab to be tested to move them off-site.

BACKGROUND

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 from flock to flock, including flocks of wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, equipment, and the clothing and shoes of caretakers. This virus affects poultry, like chickens, ducks, and turkeys, and some wild bird species, such as ducks, geese, shorebirds, and raptors.

On January 7, 2025, the Delaware Department of Agriculture issued [Heightened Biosecurity Protocols Involving Delaware Poultry Farms](#).

On January 8, 2025, the Delaware Department of Agriculture issued a [Control Order Requiring Specific Handling, Transport, and Storage of Poultry Litter Due to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The H5N1 virus has infected a small number of people across the U.S. To date, there has been no documented transmission between people in the U.S. While continuing testing of people in close contact with animals infected with HPAI indicates a low risk to the general public's health, backyard flock owners should keep birds in outdoor coops and not bring birds that have been living outside into the home. Children and pets should be kept away from wild birds and bird droppings.

If anyone in contact with poultry or wild birds begins to experience flu-like symptoms, please contact the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 888-295-5156 (after hours) or 302-744-4990 (business hours) for a referral to a DPH clinic to obtain a flu swab test. Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, congestion, body aches, fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea. If symptoms seem severe, including trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, dizziness/confusion, severe muscle pain, seizure, severe weakness or unsteadiness, worsening of chronic medical conditions, or fever or cough that begin to improve and then worsen or return, please dial 911 or visit the emergency department. Let the hospital staff and providers know if you have been exposed to poultry or wild birds.

MEDIA NOTE

All media inquiries should be directed to the Delaware Avian Influenza Joint Information Center at JIC@delaware.gov.

Due to biosecurity concerns, no on-site interviews, photos, or videos are allowed. For more information on avian influenza, visit <https://de.gov/poultry>.

###