

MEMO

To: County Extension Agents

Date: Jan. 26, 2016

Re: Avian Influenza Update

From: F. D. Clark, DVM, PhD

The December 2014-June 2015 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), was the largest animal health emergency in the history of the United States and affected poultry in 15 states. The disease outbreak caused the death and destruction of more than 48 million birds (commercial layer chickens, turkeys, game fowl, and small hobby chicken flocks) and it was estimated that the federal costs in disease control and indemnity was approximately \$1 billion. The U.S. poultry industry was severely affected by this outbreak from losses of poultry and eggs, quarantines, trade restrictions, bans, market losses, etc. The outbreak caused a loss of approximately 10 percent of total U.S. table egg chickens and 7.2 percent of the US turkey population.

In January 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic H7N8 avian influenza and low pathogenic H7N8 avian influenza (LPAI) in one county in Indiana. The HPAI was in one flock of turkeys and the low pathogenic AI was present in nine other flocks.

All of these flocks have been depopulated and there are no instances of this strain in Indiana or any other state, including Arkansas at this time.

This is a different strain of HPAI than the strains that caused the 2015 outbreak. At this writing there are no known cases of H7N8 infections in humans. One of the tools to assist in preventing the disease is biosecurity. In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to state/federal officials. The potential losses and costs associated with avian influenza outbreaks make it extremely important for the poultry producer and small poultry flock owner to protect their flocks against AI and other diseases by using biosecurity practices.

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