

Avian Influenza

Biosecurity Practices for Poultry Flock Owners

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The US APHIS Wildlife Services Avian Influenza surveillance program recently detected the virus in samples collected from wild birds in some of the North American flyways. Currently the Eurasian H5 strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was detected in wild birds in New Hampshire, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Connecticut, Virginia, Florida, and Maryland. It has also been detected in three states (Indiana, Virginia, and Kentucky) in commercial and hobby poultry. The affected poultry flocks have been depopulated.

It is extremely important that anyone involved with poultry production should review their premise Biosecurity procedures and protocols and stay vigilant to protect poultry and pet birds from this disease. This should be done by small backyard hobby flock owners and growers of commercial poultry to protect the health of their birds. 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 utilizing Biosecurity practices such as those listed below:

Commercial poultry growers should follow company Biosecurity guidelines and work closely with their flock supervisors.

1. Keep "**No Visitors**" and/or "**Restricted**" signs posted at the road entrance of the farm.
2. **Do not allow** visitors on the farm or in the poultry houses.
3. **All** farm personnel should wear **separate clothing** (including shoes, boots, hats, gloves, etc.) on the farm. Clothes used on the farm should **stay** on the farm.
4. **Completely change all clothing** after caring for the flock, and wash hands and arms thoroughly before leaving the premises.
5. **Do not visit** other poultry farms or flocks or have contact with any other species of birds.
6. Keep all poultry houses securely locked. Lock all houses from the inside while working inside.
7. All equipment, crates, coops, etc. should be **thoroughly cleaned and disinfected** before and after use.
8. **All essential visitors** (owners, feed delivery personnel, poultry catchers and haulers, service men, etc.) are to wear protective outer clothing (coveralls), boots, and headgear prior to being allowed near the poultry flock or farm.

9. **Monitor all vehicles** (service, feed delivery, poultry delivery or removal, etc.) entering the premises to determine if they have been **properly cleaned and disinfected. This includes disinfection of the tires and vehicle undercarriage.**
10. Sick and dying birds should be submitted to a diagnostic laboratory for proper diagnosis of the problem. All commercial growers should contact their flock supervisor and follow their instructions.
11. **Dead birds** are to be **properly disposed** of by burial, incineration or other approved method.
12. Any person handling wild game (especially waterfowl) **must** completely change clothing and shower or bathe before entering the premises.
13. **Do not** borrow equipment, vehicles, etc. from another poultry farm.
14. **Do not visit** areas where Avian Influenza is a problem.
15. Remember to use **basic hygiene** (as recommended by health experts) to prevent contracting any influenza virus (practices such as covering your mouth when you cough and/or sneeze and then washing your hands with soap and water afterwards).
16. **Properly handle and cook** all poultry for consumption (internal temperature of at least **165 degrees Fahrenheit**)

If you have poultry on your farm that are sick and/or dying, see any unusual signs in your poultry or have questions concerning Avian Influenza contact your local county agent, veterinarian, or livestock inspector, the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service poultry veterinarian (479-957-4245) or the Arkansas State Veterinarians office (501-907-2400).

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