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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Notification and Biosecurity Recommendations Regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to threaten Arkansas poultry owners. HPAI is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads easily 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 wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. There is no public health concern, and avian influenza does not affect poultry meat or egg products, which remain safe to eat.

To mitigate the disease risk from contact with the birds or their droppings, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Livestock and Poultry Division strongly recommends taking the following steps until further notice and to include areas outside the restricted zone (which includes a 25-mile radius surrounding Madison County):

- Keep your birds indoors or covered to prevent exposure to wild or migratory birds.
- Restrict access to any source of water that may have been contaminated by wild birds.
- Implement strict biosecurity on the premises. Alert all farm personnel of the increased risk of HPAI. Especially focusing on biosecurity methods to prevent exposure to wild waterfowl or their droppings.
- Monitor all flocks for increased mortality or clinical signs and report any concerns to your veterinarian, the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Division at 501-225-1598, or your local Arkansas Cooperative Extension County Agent. You can find your county office here: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/counties/>.

All poultry flock owners are encouraged to follow the strictest biosecurity on their farms to prevent the spread of the disease. Those steps include:

- Limit, monitor, and record any movement of people, vehicles, or animals on or off your farm.
- Permit only essential workers and vehicles to enter the farm to limit the chances of bringing the virus from an outside source.
- Avoid visiting other poultry farms and any unnecessary travel off the farm.
- Disinfect equipment, vehicles, footwear, and other items that come into contact with flocks.
- Keep your flock away from wild or migratory birds, especially waterfowl.
- Isolate any ill animals and contact your veterinarian.

For more information on avian influenza visit aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai and for information on protecting poultry, visit aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program.

Backyard flock owners who have sick or unusual deaths in their flocks should email info@agriculture.arkansas.gov or call (501) 823-1746.