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## **Arkansas Department of Agriculture Urges Poultry Owners to Increase Biosecurity, Monitoring**

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is urging poultry owners to increase biosecurity measures on their operations in response to several reports of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in other states to include some in the Mississippi Flyway.

HPAI is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry and wild birds. HPAI virus strains are extremely infections, often fatal to chickens, and can spread rapidly from flock to flock. Symptoms can include sudden increase in bird deaths with no clinical signs, lack of energy and appetite, decrease in egg production, soft- or thin-shelled or misshapen eggs, and more.

Although there have been no reports of HPAI in Arkansas this year, there have been reported cases in a commercial turkey flock in Indiana, a commercial broiler chicken flock in Kentucky, and a backyard flock of mixed species birds in Virginia.

Because of these nearby infections, Arkansas is at risk of infection and poultry owners should be on high alert. Arkansas State Veterinarian John Nilz said an increase in biosecurity should be a priority for Arkansas poultry owners.

“By practicing good biosecurity, you can reduce the risk of people, animals, equipment, or vehicles carrying infectious diseases onto your property,” said Nilz. “This will also help protect other flocks in the state by preventing the spread of disease.”

Biosecurity refers to everything people do to keep diseases – and the viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, and other microorganisms that cause diseases – away from birds, property, and people. Biosecurity measures can include keeping visitors to a minimum, changing clothes before entering poultry areas, cleaning tools or equipment before moving them to a new poultry facility, and more.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides resources on biosecurity for poultry operations through their Defend the Flock campaign, which can be found at <https://bit.ly/USDA-DTF>

Poultry owners should also monitor their flocks and report any possible symptoms to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture at 501-823-1746. More information on HPAI symptoms can be found at <https://bit.ly/367voIB>

More information on HPAI can be found at <https://bit.ly/AvianHealth>

Confirmed HPAI cases in the U.S. for 2022 can be found at <https://bit.ly/HPAI2022>

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