



Poultry owners urged to increase biosecurity efforts

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MADISON, Wisconsin – Animal health officials with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection are urging all poultry owners, regardless of size, to increase biosecurity efforts now that two strains of avian influenza have been found in the Mississippi flyway. This comes after a highly pathogenic (H7) strain was found in a Tennessee commercial chicken flock and a low pathogenic (H5) strain was found in a Wisconsin commercial turkey flock.

“It’s in a poultry owner’s best interest to take precautions now to minimize the effect that avian influenza will have on their flock if the disease makes its way to Wisconsin,” says Dr. Darlene Konkle, Wisconsin’s Assistant State Veterinarian.

The H5N2 strain found in Wisconsin is not related to the H7 strain found in Tennessee. High path strains are often fatal for birds, but the low path strain found in Wisconsin is not uncommon in poultry flocks and tends to cause few, if any, clinical signs of illness in the birds.

“Low path avian influenza is similar in severity to the common cold in humans and will eventually clear from the flock without bird loss,” Konkle said.

Konkle recommends the following six steps for protecting birds from HPAI:

1. Keep your distance—Restrict access to your property and keep your birds away from other birds.
2. Keep it clean—Wash your hands thoroughly before and after working with your birds. Clean and disinfect equipment.
3. Don’t haul disease home—Buy birds from reputable sources and keep new birds separated for at least 30 days.
4. Don’t borrow disease—Do not share equipment or supplies with neighbors or other bird owners. If you must borrow, disinfect it first.
5. Know the warning signs—Early detection can help prevent the spread of the disease. Check your birds frequently. If you find a sick or dead bird, don’t touch it.
6. Report sick birds—Don’t wait. If your birds are sick or dying at an abnormal rate, call DATCP at 1-800-572-8981. If you notice dead wild birds, call the DNR’s hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

CDC considers the risk to people to be low. No human infections with these viruses have been detected at this time. In addition, poultry and eggs are safe to consume as long as they are properly handled and meat is cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.

More information about avian influenza is available at datcp.wi.gov and from the USDA-APHIS at www.aphis.usda.gov.

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