

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Poultry



Christine B. Navarre, DVM

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a severe, highly contagious viral disease that affects both wild and domestic birds. The virus can cause significant mortality in poultry, leading to substantial economic losses and posing a threat to food security. This virus can also infect people.

HPAI in Wild Birds

- Wild birds, particularly waterfowl, are natural reservoirs for avian influenza viruses. They often carry the virus without showing signs of illness.
- Migration patterns of wild birds can spread HPAI over long distances, potentially introducing the virus to new areas and domestic poultry populations.
- Surveillance programs monitor wild bird populations to provide early warnings of HPAI presence, helping to mitigate the risk of outbreaks in domestic flocks.

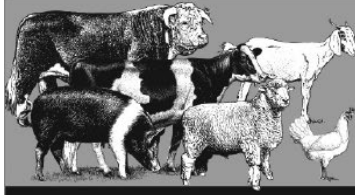
HPAI in Domestic Poultry

- Domestic poultry such as chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese are highly susceptible to HPAI. Infected birds can exhibit severe symptoms, including sudden death, respiratory distress and decreased egg production.
- Transmission can occur through direct contact with infected birds, but the virus can also be spread through contaminated equipment, manure and clothing. Poor biosecurity practices often exacerbate the spread between facilities. The most common form of bird-to-bird transmission is contact with infected fecal material.
- Control measures include culling infected flocks, implementing strict biosecurity protocols and restricting movement of poultry and poultry litter to prevent further spread.

Biosecurity Measures for Backyard Poultry Producers

- **Limit Contact with Wild Birds**
 - Keep poultry indoors or in enclosed runs to prevent contact with wild birds
 - Use a solid roof over runs to protect from wild bird fecal matter dropping into enclosures.
 - Remove standing water and manage vegetation to reduce wildlife attractants.
 - Use deterrents like scare devices to keep wild birds away from poultry areas.

For the latest research-based information visit our website at www.LSUAgCenter.com



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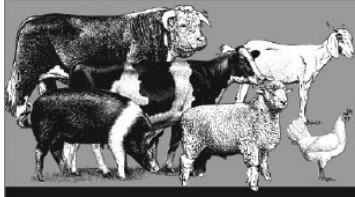


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- **Control Access to Your Flock**
 - Isolate any new birds for 10-14 days before introducing them into the existing flock.
 - Restrict visitors and avoid visiting other poultry farms or other bird populations.
 - Clean and disinfect footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact.
- **Maintain Cleanliness**
 - Regularly clean and disinfect coops, feeders and waterers.
 - Remove manure and litter frequently to reduce contamination.
 - Dedicate a set of boots and clothes that are only worn at the coop.
- **Monitor Flock Health**
 - Observe birds daily for signs of illness such as coughing, sneezing, lethargy, swollen or discolored comb/wattles, or reduced egg/soft-shelled egg production.
 - Isolate sick birds immediately and consult a veterinarian.
- **Manage Feed and Water**
 - Store feed in sealed containers to prevent contamination by wild birds and rodents.
 - Provide clean, fresh water and avoid using untreated surface water.
- **Report Suspicious Cases**
 - Contact your local veterinarian or Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Poultry Disease Diagnostic Laboratory if you suspect avian influenza.
- **Protect People**
 - Avoid direct contact with wild birds, especially if they appear ill or have died.
 - Avoid unprotected exposure to infected live or dead animals or surfaces contaminated by them.
 - It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry in the United States.

By implementing better biosecurity measures and understanding the dynamics of HPAI in both wild and domestic birds, poultry producers can strive to better protect their flocks and people. For more detailed information, refer to the USDA's Defend the Flock Resource Center at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock>.

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Additional Resources:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza>

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-health/avianinfluenza>

<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situaPon-summary/inhumans.html>

Authors

Will Strickland

Assistant Extension Agent - Poultry Production

Hill Farm Research Station

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

Christine B. Navarre, DVM, MS, DACVIM-LA

Professor and Extension Veterinarian

School of Animal Sciences

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

December 2024

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