



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HEALTH / AGRICULTURE BUILDING
PO Box 330
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

DOUGLAS H. FISHER
Secretary

February 10, 2023

Dear Poultry Owner:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks throughout the country. Currently 47 states in the United States have been affected over the last year. The virus remains present in wildlife and has been detected in many states, most on the Atlantic flyway. As HPAI continues to spread across the United States, poultry owners are urged to review their biosecurity practices and remain on alert for HPAI in their flock.

HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species. No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern. As a reminder, poultry and eggs' proper handling and cooking to an internal temperature of 165 °F kill bacteria and viruses.

Signs of HPAI in poultry can include:

- Sudden death
- Decrease in feed or water consumption
- Respiratory signs such as coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge
- Swelling around the eyes
- Open-mouth breathing
- Darkening of the comb/wattles
- Reddening of the shanks or feet
- Decreased egg production
- Lethargy

HPAI spreads through contact with bodily secretions, including feces and ocular, nasal, or oral secretions from infected birds. The virus can be spread on vehicles, equipment, shoes, etc. Practicing good biosecurity can help prevent the spread of HPAI onto your farm.

- Eliminating exposure of domestic birds to wild birds. Minimize standing water and extra feed in the environment that might attract wild birds.
- Avoid contact with other poultry.
- Keep a specific set of shoes and clothing for tending your poultry. You may also consider disposable boot covers or a foot bath that is changed regularly.
- Minimize the number of people who visit your birds.
- Avoid sharing equipment with other flocks. Use appropriate disinfectants for equipment that must come onto a farm.

For the latest update on the national outbreak visit:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai>

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- Obtain new birds from Avian Influenza tested flocks only.

H5N1 is a **reportable disease**. Any individual who shall gain knowledge or suspect the existence of the disease shall notify this office without delay. Deceased birds should be double-bagged and stored at refrigerated temperatures for testing. Do not expose dead poultry to the environment, other poultry, or wildlife/wild birds. Wash your hands after handling sick or dead birds.

If you suspect H5N1, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400.

For additional information about the disease and outreach materials, please see:

- <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/ah/>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/ai>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amar Patil".

Amar Patil DVM, MVSc, PhD, Diplomate ACVM
State Veterinarian / Director, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health
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Phone: (609) 671-6400

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