

New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Memo

To: Veterinarians
From: Amar Patil DVM, MVSc, PhD, Diplomate ACVM
Date: February 06, 2023
Re: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

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 in 47 states since February 2022. The virus is also present in wildlife and has been detected in many states along the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central flyways. As HPAI continues to spread across the United States, veterinarians are encouraged to be alert for HPAI and continue practicing good biosecurity to prevent the spread of the virus.

HPAI is highly contagious and often fatal in domestic poultry species. No clinical cases of human infection have been reported, and Officials are not aware of any public health significance associated with this virus. Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk; poultry and eggs are safe to eat.

Clinical signs of HPAI can include decreased food/water intake; respiratory signs such as coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, periocular swelling, comb and wattle cyanosis, ecchymoses of the shanks; decreased egg product; and neurological signs. Deceased birds should be double-bagged and stored at refrigerated temperatures for testing. Do not expose suspect dead poultry to other poultry, wildlife, or wild birds. Wash your hands after handling sick or dead birds. For more information about the disease, visit https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/highly_pathogenic_avian_influenza.pdf.

Proper biosecurity can prevent the introduction and spread of HPAI. This includes eliminating exposure of domestic birds to wild birds, minimizing traffic into the premises, and using appropriate disinfectants for equipment, shoes, and any other potential fomites. Disinfectants effective against HPAI include sodium hypochlorite (bleach), quaternary ammonium compounds, and other agents.

The Division of Animal Health (DAH) Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory (www.jerseyvetlab.nj.gov) is available to assist with HPAI diagnosis. Please contact the DAH for more instructions on testing protocols or contact the Lab at 609-406-6999 or via email – jerseyvetlab@ag.nj.gov.

HPAI is a reportable disease. Any veterinarian or other person who shall gain knowledge or suspect the existence of the disease shall notify this office without delay.

If you suspect HPAI, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400 or state.veterinarian@ag.nj.gov, or

NJ USDA-APHIS-VS Office 609-259-5260 or 1-866-536-7593

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/hpai-2022>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/>