



Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-4373 FAX (602) 542-5420

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: April 22, 2015

MEDIA CONTACT: Laura Oxley, 602-542-1094

Arizona Taking Steps to Protect Poultry

The Arizona Department of Agriculture is working with large and small poultry farmers in the state concerning the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Since the first discovery in North America in December, the department has published information on the State Veterinarian's blog as well as the agriculture.az.gov website.

With this week's announcement of the USDA confirming Highly Pathogenic subtype H5N2 in several different types of poultry flocks in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa, the state is increasing its surveillance.

"There are currently no cases of HPAI in Arizona," said Arizona's State Veterinarian, Dr. Perry Durham. "However, as long as the HPAI virus continues to spread in the U.S., the risk of infection remains. Arizona has a robust surveillance program actively looking for the disease in domestic poultry and wild birds."

Avian Influenza is a highly contagious viral disease of chickens, turkeys, pheasants, ducks, quail, geese and many wild birds. HPAI can be carried by wild waterfowl without symptoms. Direct contact with infected birds, contaminated objects/equipment, and droplets in air (short distances) can spread the virus which is found in feces, saliva and respiratory secretions.

Signs of HPAI infection include; lack of energy or appetite, birds huddling together, swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks, coughing, sneezing or sudden death without any clinical signs.

Vaccination is not currently available for this HPAI strain, so disease prevention is important.

Follow these steps:

- People should avoid contact with sick or dead poultry or wild birds
- If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water and change into clean clothes before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds
- Keep tools and equipment clean
- If you own poultry, do not have contact with other flocks or flock premises
- If you have any questions about the health of your birds, contact your local veterinarian
- Additional information on how to keep your flock healthy can be found at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>

All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard enthusiasts, can do their part to protect Arizona poultry by immediately reporting sick birds or unusual bird deaths to the Arizona State Veterinarian's Office at (602)-542-4293 or the USDA sick bird hotline at 1-866-536-7593.

Although HPAI is a deadly disease of domestic poultry, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk for infection of people to be low. To date, this H5N2 strain has not caused any human illness. It is also safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry products, including meat and eggs.

For human health questions about Avian Influenza, refer to the Arizona Department of Health Services web site, <http://www.azhealth.gov/phs/oids/vector/avian-flu/faqs.htm>.