

DHD#10 NOTIFIED OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WEXFORD COUNTY

Non-commercial Poultry Flock Tests Positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

May 3, 2022 – Following an investigation by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) was notified that highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was detected in a non-commercial backyard poultry flock in Wexford County. According to MDARD, the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory detected the presence of HPAI in a flock of approximately 60 birds of various species.

HPAI is a form of influenza that is very contagious and can spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. To protect other flocks in Michigan, the birds of the effected flock have been depopulated to prevent disease spread.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), these HPAI detections do not present a major, immediate public health concern. However, last week in Colorado, one person did test positive for avian influenza after working to depopulate poultry infected with HPAI. This highlights the fact that people who have job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds are at higher risk of infection and should take appropriate precautions outlined in [CDC guidance](#).

“The health of our animals is important to our health as well,” said DHD#10 Medical Director Dr. Jennifer Morse. “Infected birds can pass bird flu to people that work or live close to them. It is also possible for bird flu viruses to change and gain the ability to spread easily between people, leading to a flu pandemic. Avian influenza has played a part in all the last four major flu pandemics.”

Poultry owners and caretakers are **highly encouraged** to watch for signs of avian influenza in their flock. This includes unusual deaths, a drop in egg production, a significant decrease in water consumption, or an increase in sick birds. If avian influenza is suspected, they are urged to contact MDARD **immediately** at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours). Doing so is not only important for the poultry, but to ensure the owner’s health and safety.

Whether you have a few backyard birds or a large commercial flock, following these biosecurity measures can help protect Michigan’s domestic birds:

- Preventing contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing them indoors or ensuring their outdoor area is fully enclosed.
- Washing your hands before and after handling birds as well as when moving between different coops.
- Disinfecting boots and other gear when moving between coops.
- Not sharing equipment or other supplies between coops or other farms.
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and other supplies between uses. If it cannot be disinfected, discard it.



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- Using well or municipal water as drinking water for birds.
- Keeping poultry feed secure so there is no contact between the feed/feed ingredients and wild birds or rodents.

Stay Up to Date

Subscribe to receive email notifications by visiting [MDARD's website](#) and clicking on the “**Avian Influenza**” link. After entering a valid email address, subscribers will receive updates and alerts regarding the status of avian influenza in Michigan whenever there are new developments to report. Additional resources can also be found here: <https://www.michigan.gov/birdflu>.

More information on avian influenza and how to protect can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's website here: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-commercial-backyard-flocks>.

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