

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Minnesota

What is Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza?

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a severe form of influenza virus that affects poultry.
- HPAI usually causes very high death rates in poultry flocks. Birds from affected flocks are not marketed for their meat.
- A Minnesota turkey flock tested positive for HPAI in early March. Birds from this flock did not enter the food system.
- This strain of HPAI, H5N2, has also been found in other states and Canada.
- Though HPAI is highly contagious in birds, the risk of human infection is very low. To date, the HPAI strains circulating in the U.S. have not been found to cause illness in people.

Is it safe to eat chicken, turkey, eggs and other poultry products?

Yes, properly handled poultry and poultry products, such as eggs, are safe to eat. To ensure poultry is safe, follow these steps:

- Keep clean; wash hands, and clean and sanitize work surfaces and equipment.
- Separate raw and cooked meat; avoid cross-contamination.
- Cook meat thoroughly to an internal temperature of 165°F.
- Chill; keep and store food at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or below and the freezer at 0 °F (-17.7 °C) or below.

What is being done to protect other birds from becoming infected in Minnesota?

- Backyard and commercial flocks within a ten kilometer radius of the affected farm have been quarantined, tested, and monitored carefully for signs of HPAI. All flocks in this area have tested negative for Avian Influenza.
- State and Federal agencies are working together to conduct additional surveillance within a 20 kilometer radius of the affected flock.
- Poultry and poultry products cannot be moved out of quarantine zones until the quarantine is lifted.

What can I do to protect my birds?

- HPAI is carried by waterfowl and tends to travel with flocks of ducks and geese as they migrate. Waterfowl are natural carriers of Avian Influenza viruses, but typically do not become ill from the disease.
- Controlling access to domestic poultry pens and barns is a good first step in preventing introduction of a disease like HPAI.
- Preventing contact with wild waterfowl is very important to maintaining good biosecurity on poultry farms.
- Sanitizing equipment and clothing used around birds can also be important in preventing the introduction of an unwanted disease.

Where can I get more information?

- If you have food safety questions or concerns, contact the **Minnesota Department of Agriculture Dairy and Food Inspection at 1-651-201-6027**.
- If you see sickness in birds, contact the **Minnesota Board of Animal Health at 651-296-2942**. For updates on the H5N2 situation in MN, visit their website www.bah.state.mn.us
- If you are concerned because you or your family member becomes sick, contact the **Minnesota Department of Health at 1-888-345-0823**.
- USDA – What is Avian Influenza? www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/AI/
- FDA – What Consumers Need to Know About Avian Influenza - www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm085550.htm