

Poultry Updates

I. *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) import variance request

March 7, 2025: Notification was provided by Dr. Ben Wileman from Select Genetics regarding the loss of their NPIP *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) status at their Osceola Hatchery in Iowa due to having to bring eggs from MS positive breeder flocks. Because this hatchery supplies poulters for many farms in MN, a Rule Variance for rule 1721.0280 Subp. 5 was requested to avoid a shortage of poulters to MN growers.

- Minnesota Rule 1721.0280, Subp. 5 requires all turkey hatching eggs, poulters, and turkeys imported into the state originate from a hatchery or breeding flock that is classified *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* clean and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean under the plan (NPIP); or be individually identified with a leg or wing band and be negative to a *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and a *Mycoplasma synoviae* test within 30 days prior to importation.
- Minnesota Rule 1721.0344, Subp. 2 allows for commercial egg-type chicken, commercial meat-type chicken, or commercial turkey hatcheries or breeding flocks infected with *Mycoplasma synoviae* or *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* to participate in an approved salvage program or be disposed of in a manner approved by the board.

A mitigation plan was developed to reduce the risk of transmission through the breeder flock and the hatchery. Farm-level and Hatchery-level mitigation measures were implemented. Notification of commercial flocks receiving poulters from the hatchery was required to include a list of clinical signs suggestive of MS infection and where to report if MS is suspected.

Stopping the shipment of poulters into Minnesota from this hatchery would have a serious negative impact on the supply of turkeys in Minnesota, especially in the face of on-going HPAI and Avian Metapneumovirus infections. On March 17, 2025, a variance was granted and import permit approved. The variance was allowed until September 2025 with the potential for extension upon written request, if needed.

An extension of the variance was requested on September 2, 2025, as the hatchery was not expected to regain their U.S. *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) Clean classification until April 2026.

A second extension of the variance was requested on April 3, 2026, as the hatchery was not expected to regain their U.S. *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) Clean classification until July 2026.

A third extension of the variance was requested on July 21, 2026, due to ongoing *Mycoplasma Synoviae* outbreaks in Missouri. The variance was allowed until September 30, 2026, with a required update to the Board for approval to extend.

No known spread of MS has been detected in Minnesota as a result of this variance.

II. National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Updates

The 47th Biennial Conference of the NPIP took place August 11-14, 2026, in Salt Lake City, Utah. There were 29 proposed changes to the General Provisions or Program Standards considered and discussed at the meeting. Of the 29 proposals, 23 passed through committee and final delegate voting.

General Conference Committee (GCC) updates:

- Dr. Ben Wileman (MN) rotated off the GCC as the West North Central member and chair of the GCC. The new GCC member elected at the Biennial Conference is Dr. Travis Schaal (MN), with Dr. Shauna Voss (MN) as the Alternate.
- The GCC operates as a Federal Advisory Committee to USDA and must have a charter in place to act as the official liaison between the poultry industry, cooperating state agencies, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture on health standards, diagnostics, and disease prevention. The Charter lapsed in May 2025 but was reestablished for a two-year period. The current Charter expires May 2027.

The process for finalizing amendments to the NPIP Provisions and Program Standards continue to experience significant delays. Amendments from the 2022 Biennial Conference were finalized September 29, 2025. The proposed rule from the 2024 Biennial Conference was published August 5, 2026, with comments being accepted through October 5, 2026. Anyone wishing to submit a public comment can use the navigations on the Federal Register website for submission. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/08/05/2026-15845/national-poultry-improvement-plan-and-auxiliary-provisions>

NPIP program continues to have vacancies in staff positions. Current vacancies are the Assistant Director of Poultry Programs, the Director of NPIP (Senior Coordinator), and the Compartmentalization Program Director.

III. Pullorum-Typhoid Antigen shortage

Availability of pullorum-typhoid (pullorum) antigen continues to be an issue. Charles River Laboratories, distributed by AVS Bio, is the only supplier of pullorum antigen in the U.S. The first backorder of product occurred in the fall of 2018 due to a change in manufacturer that required a new USDA licensure. By spring of 2019, the backorder was ongoing and the antigen currently on hand was expiring. The Board received approval from NPIP staff to implement a contingency plan that allowed the use of expired antigen as long as monthly verification testing with positive and negative controls at the MPTL provided assurance the antigen would respond appropriately in the field. No variance in the rules relating to pullorum-typhoid testing was needed at that time. Antigen became available in late 2019.

As a result of that significant availability issue, the Board began restricting how much antigen would be distributed and available to Authorized Poultry Testing Agents (APTA). Since 2020, APTAs are only provided with enough antigen for immediate testing needs (number of birds and planned testing dates must be provided by APTA at time of request). This strategy has helped ensure antigen availability and reduce waste.

In 2023-2024, a similar backorder/shortage of pullorum antigen occurred. By spring of 2024, the Board's supply of antigen was gone, and we were unable to supply enough antigen to meet state requirements for poultry exhibitions and community sales. In an effort to allow the continuation of poultry exhibitions and community

sales, the Board required all exhibitions and community sales to petition for a pullorum-typhoid testing variance, as required by Minnesota state statute 14.056. The variance was needed for only a short period of time as antigen became available in April 2024.

Unfortunately, pullorum antigen is once again on backorder until at least November 2026. Although we continue to implement various mitigation strategies to help stretch our remaining supply of antigen, we may run out of the antigen before we are able to restock, and antigen may once again not be available to APTAs needing to test for poultry exhibitions and community sales. A temporary variance may need to be implemented again unless the opposed by the Board.

IV. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

On July 22, 2026, the State of Minnesota completely fulfilled the necessary actions and surveillance requirements to again self-declare itself free from HPAI in Poultry. At that time, only one WOAHP Non-Poultry premises remained under quarantine. On September 1, 2026, Minnesota had its first detection of HPAI in a commercial meat-type turkey operation in Wright County. The Board and its partners are prepared for another potential wave of HPAI cases this fall.

Information on the current event and HPAI response in Minnesota can be found at <https://www.bah.state.mn.us/hpai>.