



Avian influenza concerns prompt biosecurity reminder for poultry owners

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MADISON, Wisconsin – The confirmation of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in a commercial turkey flock in Minnesota yesterday is a clear reminder to poultry owners to take precautions against the disease, say animal health officials with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

“The influenza strain is the same one found in backyard and wild birds in the Pacific flyway that includes Washington, Oregon and Idaho. This confirmation is the first finding in the Mississippi flyway, so Wisconsin bird owners need to take notice and prepare,” says Dr. Paul McGraw, Wisconsin’s State Veterinarian.

Though the disease is often fatal for birds, the CDC considers the risk to people from these highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 infections in wild birds, backyard flock and commercial poultry, to be low. No human infections with these viruses have been detected at this time. In addition, poultry and eggs are safe to consume as long as they are properly handled and meat is cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.

“It’s in a poultry owner’s best interest to take precautions now to minimize the effect that HPAI will have on their flock if the disease makes its way to Wisconsin,” McGraw says.

McGraw recommends the following six steps for protecting birds from HPAI:

1. Keep your distance—Restrict access to your property and keep your birds away from other birds.
2. Keep it clean—Wash your hands thoroughly before and after working with your birds. Clean and disinfect equipment.
3. Don’t haul disease home—Buy birds from reputable sources and keep new birds separated for at least 30 days.
4. Don’t borrow disease—Do not share equipment or supplies with neighbors or other bird owners. If you must borrow, disinfect it first.
5. Know the warning signs—Early detection can help prevent the spread of the disease. Check your birds frequently. If you find a sick or dead bird, don’t touch it.
6. Report sick birds—Don’t wait. If your birds are sick or dying, call DATCP at 1-800-572-8981. If you notice dead wild birds, call the DNR’s hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

More information about avian influenza is available at datcp.wi.gov and from the USDA-APHIS at www.aphis.usda.gov.

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