

## Updated Avian Influenza Information – March 2017

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The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) on March 5, 2017 in a commercial poultry (chicken) breeder flock located in Lincoln County, Tennessee. This strain of HPAI has been further confirmed by testing at the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory as H7N9. The lineage of this strain can be traced to North American wild birds. This is not the same strain of the virus that has impacted poultry production and infected humans in Asia, nor is it the same strain that was detected in flocks during the winter of 2014 and spring of 2015 in the Midwestern United States. The infected flock of 73,500 birds is located along the Mississippi flyway. The majority of Florida, excluding the far western panhandle, is located along the Atlantic flyway. APHIS and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture have initiated a joint response to the findings that includes quarantining of the affected premises and depopulation of affected flocks within the quarantine zone. None of the affected animals will be allowed to enter the food chain.

### What is Avian Influenza?

There are two main types of Avian Influenza, Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Both types of avian influenza are caused by viruses and the distinction between the two is the severity of the disease within a bird flock. Because this disease is caused by a virus, the possibility of mutation is high. This means that new strains of the virus can occur at any time within a host or host flock. The main reservoir of avian influenza, both LPAI and HPAI, tend to be wild birds, especially waterfowl and migratory birds. In most cases the carrier animals will not display any signs or symptoms of disease, so it is difficult to observe wild birds for signs of infection. It should also be noted that there are cases of LPAI mutating into HPAI, so the response by USDA, state Agriculture Departments, and local authorities is the same for any avian influenza – biosecurity, surveillance, reporting, movement control, vaccination, quarantine, and depopulation.

### Humans and Avian Influenza

There have been sporadic cases of humans becoming infected with Avian Influenza. However, most of these cases have occurred in Asia and the odds of a human contracting the disease are very low. In cases where there has been transmission of the virus from birds to humans there was a high level of contact and interaction with sick or infected birds or their bodily fluids.

### Food and Avian Influenza

It is important to note that birds from quarantined or infected flocks are not allowed to enter the food supply and that commercial flocks are constantly being monitored for the presence of the Avian Influenza virus (both LPAI and HPAI). It is also important to note that proper cooking of poultry and eggs will kill the Avian Influenza virus. The proper final internal cooking temperature for poultry and eggs is 165°F

### What can I do to protect my flock?

As with all potential diseases in production animals, management is key. There is no treatment for Avian Influenza, but there are prevention measures that can be taken. The following steps can help protect your flock:

- Restrict access to your property and flock by humans and other animals.
- Regularly wash clothes and equipment that are used on the farm.
- Do not visit other poultry flocks.
- Do not share equipment between flocks that are located on different premises.
- Restrict access of your flock to waterfowl and open water sources.

## **Additional Information**

Additional information about Avian Influenza can be found at the following sites:

### **USDA information on the current outbreak in Tennessee**

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/animals/one-health/avian-influenza>

### **USDA-APHIS news release concerning the current outbreak in Tennessee**

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa\\_by\\_date/sa-2017/hpai-tn](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2017/hpai-tn)

### **USDA-APHIS information about the outbreak in 2014-2015**

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian-influenza-disease/defend-the-flock/2014-2015-hpai-outbreak>

### **Questions and Answers about the biology of Avian Influenza**

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/avian-influenza-biology-outbreaks-qa.pdf>

### **Questions and Answers about Food Safety and Avian Influenza**

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/avian-influenza-food-safety-qa.pdf>

### **Migratory Flyways of the Americas**

[http://www.audubon.org/birds/flyways?ms=digital-acq-ppc-google-x-20160000\\_google\\_grant&gclid=Cj0KEQjwk-jGBRCbxoPLId\\_bp-IBeiQAgJaftzV8bPXDxvf2-ZU9sSagG9dd4rc79Mbase8EvdONLYaAmHH8P8HAQ](http://www.audubon.org/birds/flyways?ms=digital-acq-ppc-google-x-20160000_google_grant&gclid=Cj0KEQjwk-jGBRCbxoPLId_bp-IBeiQAgJaftzV8bPXDxvf2-ZU9sSagG9dd4rc79Mbase8EvdONLYaAmHH8P8HAQ)

### **USDA-APHIS fact sheet about Avian Influenza Testing and Diagnostics**

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-avian-influenza-diagnostics-testing-factsheet.pdf>

### **Questions and Answers about Border Protection and Trade regarding Avian Influenza**

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/avian-influenza-border-protection-trade-qa.pdf>