

To All Pennsylvania Poultry Producers

April 4, 2019

Dear Poultry Producer,

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture recently reported a case of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI), H7N3, in a mixed duck/chicken live-bird market production flock in Lancaster county. Avian Influenza is a Dangerous Transmissible Disease in Pennsylvania and is reportable to the World Organization of Animal Health, and the department takes regulatory action to control and eliminate this disease. Known infected flocks are placed under quarantine, which restricts the movement of birds, litter, and products. The infected flock, which had outdoor access, is located in a poultry-dense area and surveillance of commercial flocks in the surrounding 10-kilometer area is ongoing. Wild bird migration season is underway in Pennsylvania and there is a risk of wild birds, especially wild waterfowl, spreading LPAI to commercial and backyard poultry flocks.

The department has also been monitoring the ongoing outbreak of *Coryza* (*Avibacterium paragallinarum*) in Pennsylvania flocks. Infection with the bacteria that causes *Coryza* can cause respiratory disease, production losses, and may cause death loss in the flock. Although *Coryza* is not included on the list of Dangerous Transmissible Diseases in Pennsylvania, the department regards the current situation as being serious enough to recommend that precautionary measures be taken now to minimize the threat to commercial and backyard poultry operations. The disease has been confirmed by laboratory testing to date in Lancaster, Franklin, Juniata, and York counties, and there is a recently identified suspect flock in Columbia county. The last laboratory update reports that more than 20 flocks have been confirmed with infection. The affected flocks are predominately layer flocks, but broiler and pullet flocks have also been affected. A layer flock in Dauphin county was suspected to be infected based on clinical signs, but has recovered. The list of counties and the number of affected flocks can change daily, and the current list is available through PennAg Industries.

Information about the disease is available from the New Bolton Center poultry laboratory and online at the following Penn State Extension link:

<https://extension.psu.edu/avian-coryza-an-emerging-disease-in-pennsylvania>

Diseases such as LPAI and *Coryza* can be spread through direct contact with infected birds, even if they are not showing clinical signs of disease, and through indirect contact with manure from infected flocks, shared equipment, contaminated feed and water, animal pests, and visitors. The department recommends the following:

- ✓ All producers maintain a written biosecurity plan for their flocks and ensure that all people entering the premises follow these best management practices. Biosecurity plans should include handling of litter and mortalities, in addition to the other items suggested by the National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards.

- ✓ Since disease organisms can survive for a period of time in used litter, used litter should be stacked or composted on site for as long as possible before being spread on fields.
- ✓ All dead birds should always be handled appropriately — removed promptly and composted on site whenever possible. If composting on site is not feasible, carcasses should be transported safely and with biosecurity in mind. Trucks carrying carcasses should always be covered to prevent aerosolization of any disease organisms; the route should be chosen to avoid poultry-dense areas; the trucks should be cleaned and disinfected before entering poultry premises and after hauling carcasses; and drivers should follow farm biosecurity plans, avoiding poultry areas and wearing clean boots on site, at minimum. Carcasses must be disposed of appropriately at the destination. Haulers and dead animal disposal businesses must be licensed with the department.

Due to the extent of these disease outbreaks in Pennsylvania poultry, the department recommends that you move all poultry indoors. This will help prevent exposure to wild birds and other animals which could potentially carry disease and infect your flock. It will also reduce the risk of exposure to disease organisms which have been aerosolized through the spreading of manure on crop fields. The risk of infection is expected to decrease with warmer weather — higher temperatures and sunshine should help destroy the organisms in the environment.

If you suspect that your flock is infected with Avian Influenza or other reportable disease, please contact the department 24/7 at 717-772-2852.

Thank you.

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Enclosure – NPIP Program Standard E (Biosecurity)