

October 24, 2023

To: Pennsylvania Poultry Producers

Dear Pennsylvania Poultry Producers,

As you know, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) (H5) has been circulating in the wild bird population in the United States and was identified in commercial poultry in early 2022. Since that time, HPAI has been identified in 862 flocks, including 337 commercial poultry and 525 backyard flocks. Forty-seven states have been affected, and trade embargoes as a result of the infected flocks were widespread.

In July and August of this year, HPAI was confirmed in multiple species in live bird markets in two Mid-Atlantic states. This led to extensive tracebacks into states supplying birds to these markets, including Pennsylvania, resulting in quarantines and testing. This caused delays in bird movements into the live bird marketing system, and tied up Commonwealth staff and other resources. No AI was identified in PA poultry as a result of the source flock testing.

HPAI has recently been confirmed in the U.S. in commercial and backyard flocks. It has been confirmed in 10 states and 22 flocks in the past 30 days. These states include Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington.

These recent detections should act as a reminder that a virulent strain of Avian Influenza virus continues to circulate in the wild bird population and is again being introduced into commercial and backyard poultry in the U.S.

Real-time analysis maps provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology show intensities of actual nocturnal bird migration as detected by the US weather surveillance radar network between local sunset to sunrise and these maps are showing that migrating birds are moving across many states, including Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture first recommended that organic producers move poultry indoors in February 2022. The Department is maintaining this recommendation to keep poultry indoors through at least December 31, 2023, and until we determine the risk to allow outdoor access is acceptable. It is also recommended that any producer who notices black vultures or wild waterfowl near a poultry premises maintain the flock indoors. If any black vultures and wild waterfowl are seen dead, please contact the PA Game Commission or USDA Wildlife Services.

Producers are encouraged to implement strict biosecurity practices at all times, monitor bird health, and report any unexplained mortality and morbidity in a flock to the Department at 717-772-2852 (24/7).

Thank you,



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