

Veterinary Extension



Bird Flu

What is it?

How to avoid it?

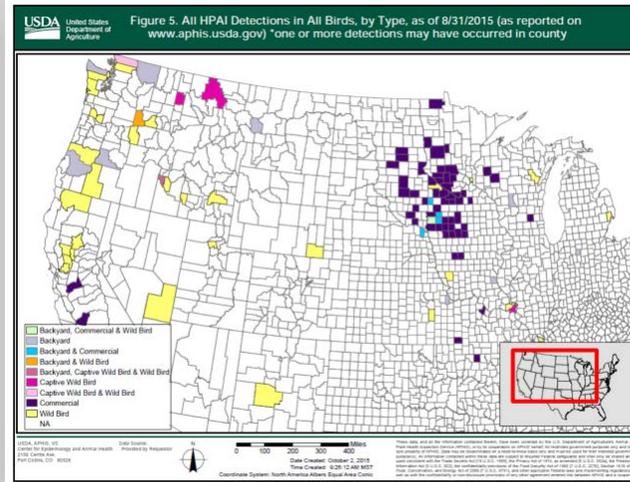
During Winter and Spring of 2015, bird flu devastated the U.S. poultry population and affected millions of birds from commercial and noncommercial flocks in more than 20 states.

Q: Is this a new bird disease in the US?

A: Flu virus has many different types, and this particular type that affected millions of birds is new to the US.

Q: Is it the same as the human influenza?

A: This particular version of the virus does not infect humans. As stated by CDC, this is strictly a bird disease and not a threat to human health. Eggs, chicken and turkey are safe to eat.



Many of the Western and Midwestern States were affected with bird flu in 2015. Additionally, Indiana was the only state affected in the 2016 bird flu outbreak.

Q: Can this disease affect my backyard/show flock or 4-H project?

Yes, Avian influenza can infect all domestic poultry including chickens, turkeys, and ducks.



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Q: Is this why there were no birds at the fairs in 2015?

In an effort to minimize the risk of disease spread and protect poultry flocks in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Agriculture in 2015 banned all live bird gatherings, including fairs, shows, swap meets and all other exhibitions.

Q: How will I know if my birds get infected with this virus?

One of the earliest signs of the disease is increased death with up to 100% mortality in many cases.

Birds will also show signs of sickness, twisted necks, blue and swollen faces and feet. The most prominent necropsy lesion is hemorrhages on the proventriculus (See pictures below).



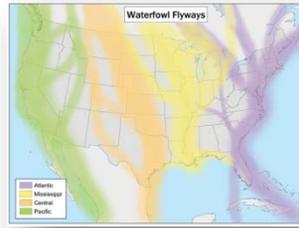
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Poultry Owners



The United States aims to remain free from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (bird flu). This means that the preferred course of action in the event of an outbreak is to immediately eradicate the disease.

Poultry Owners need to be on alert, and protect their birds through proper biosecurity. Owners and their flocks must avoid any direct or indirect contact with wild birds or other poultry. If there is high mortality, owners should submit birds to be tested.



Wild migratory waterfowl are thought to be the source of the disease. The state of Ohio is part of the Mississippi Flyway.

Q: Is the US free of the disease now?

A: It is true there have been no recent cases involving the 2015 virus in any domestic poultry reported in the U.S. However, this virus was predicted to survive in the wild migratory waterfowl population for an estimated 3-5 years. Additionally, another Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus, from North America affected turkeys in Indiana in 2016 and was quickly controlled. Wild bird migrations occur during the Spring and Fall of each year; thus, the outbreaks could return during those times. Federal and State authorities are working with local poultry professionals and poultry owners to better prepare for possible future outbreaks.

Q: How can I protect my birds from this terrible disease?

BIOSECURITY



- Biosecurity includes all of the sanitary practices that are implemented to prevent the spread of diseases. These include:
 - Prevent any contact with wild birds
 - Prevent any contact with other poultry
 - Prevent any contact with others animals, wild or domestic
 - Keep your birds sheltered in animal proof/ bird proof houses
 - Avoid visitors to your flock
 - Use disposable gloves and shoe covers before you come in contact with your birds or their environment
 - Wash your hands before and after contact with your birds or their environment
 - Use dedicated cloths to work with your birds, or use disposable coveralls
 - Avoid using surface water (ponds or lakes) as a source of drinking water for your birds
 - Always use clean and disinfected water for birds' drinking water
 - Acquire your feed from reliable sources and store it in a clean, dry, and cool place away from wild birds or wild animal's access, particularly rodents
 - Given the importance of biosecurity practices and the increased risk of this disease spreading among poultry you may gain an understanding as to why there were no birds at the 2015 fairs
- USDA provides excellent resources for bird biosecurity available at healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov

I think my birds have the flu, what do I do?

If your birds are dying at an alarming rate, you should immediately contact any of the following:

Ohio Department of Agriculture



Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory: (614) 728-6220
After Hours: (888) 456-3405.

US Department of Agriculture



Toll-free number
(866)-536-7593

Ohio Poultry Association



info@ohiopoultry.org
Phone: (614) 882-6111

If your birds are suspected of having influenza, they will be tested in ADDL