

January 6, 2022

Hello Maine Poultry Community!

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Poultry Health Team and University of Maine Cooperative Extension would like to share some important poultry health news and recommendations. We are sharing this information with our poultry community in response to a recent detection of an important disease of poultry in North America: Avian Influenza (AI). Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has recently been detected in an exhibition flock of poultry in Eastern Canada (Newfoundland), and several strains of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) have been detected in Maine's wild waterfowl this season.

What does this mean for our poultry community? While LPAI may not be severe, HPAI can cause significant disease and loss within poultry flocks, as well as posing a human health risk. Since wild migrating waterfowl pass through our region, as well as areas where higher prevalence of AI is known to exist, they pose a risk to our poultry.

Avian Influenza (AI) is a viral disease of poultry that can be introduced to flocks that have had direct or indirect contact with the manure or respiratory secretions of infected wild birds or other infected poultry. Exposure to AI can occur through a shared water source, consuming contaminated feed off the ground, or even sharing an environment with infected wild birds as they pass through. For free range poultry and those co-housed with domestic ducks, this risk is especially high. Wild birds and domestic waterfowl may be carrying this virus even when they appear outwardly healthy.

Symptoms of avian influenza include coughing, respiratory distress, watery discharge from the nostrils, puffy eyes, discolored wattles/combs and legs, decreased egg production, decreased energy and often death. *Most commonly the signs of disease come on quickly and afflict the majority of the flock. If you see signs concerning for avian influenza, please reach out for assistance as soon as possible!* You may call your flock veterinarian, the DACF poultry health team, the Cooperative Extension Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory or the USDA. Contact information is at the end of this letter.

Practicing good farm biosecurity is the single most effective and inexpensive thing you can do to immediately protect and improve the health of poultry, as well as other livestock.

A few suggested resources for learning about biosecurity practice in outdoor flocks can be found at the [USDA Defend the Flock Biosecurity Resource Center](#). *If you have questions or would like advice on which biosecurity steps might be most important for your birds or barn infrastructure, please reach out to the poultry health resources listed below!*

DACF POULTRY HEALTH TEAM

Carolyn Hurwitz, DVM
Maine Assistant State Veterinarian
carolyn.hurwitz@maine.gov
207-592-6698

Donna Flint
Poultry Health Technician
donna.flint@maine.gov
207-557-4623

Michele Walsh, DVM
Maine State Veterinarian
michele.walsh@maine.gov
207-287-7615

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION: VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LAB

umvdl@maine.edu
207-581-3874

USDA POULTRY HEALTH: 866-536-7593