



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PO Box 400
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

EDWARD D. WENGRYN
Secretary

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

December 19, 2024

Dear Backyard Flock Poultry Owner:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks throughout the nation in an ongoing outbreak since 2022. The HPAI virus remains present in wild birds and other wildlife, as well as domestic poultry and livestock in the US.

In this outbreak, all 50 states have been affected, including various domestic bird types such as backyard-raised egg layers, meat birds, ducks, and geese. Over 1300 poultry premises in the country, involving millions of domestic poultry, have had detections since the beginning of this outbreak. There has been a rise in HPAI detections in domestic poultry, particularly in western states, over the past month. In addition, since March 2024, over 800 premises in 17 states have documented HPAI in domestic livestock, primarily dairy cattle. The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) has also reported over 60 human cases related to individuals who had close contact with infected livestock or poultry.

As HPAI continues to spread across the United States, poultry owners are urged to review their biosecurity practices and remain on alert for clinical signs of HPAI in their flock. Multi-species operations, particularly those with both poultry and ruminants on-site, are encouraged to mitigate areas in which the spread of disease between species may be at risk.

Online resources, such as [Secure Milk Supply- Biosecurity](https://securemilksupply.org/milk-producers/biosecurity/) - <https://securemilksupply.org/milk-producers/biosecurity/>, [CFSPH - Biosecurity](https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/biosecurity/) - <https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/biosecurity/> and [USDA Defend the Flock](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock) - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock> can be utilized to tailor a farm-specific biosecurity plan. It is recommended that producers focus on-farm biosecurity practices to prevent wild bird contact with their poultry and livestock. USDA Wildlife Services (908-735-5654) can assist with wild bird mitigation plans on agricultural premises.

HPAI is a reportable disease. If you suspect HPAI in your poultry, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amar Patil".

Amar Patil DVM, MVSc, PhD, Diplomate ACVM
State Veterinarian / Director, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health
P.O. Box 330 Trenton, NJ 08625-0330, Phone: (609) 671-64000