

Protecting Your Backyard Flock: Avian Influenza

Famo Flier

As the name suggests, avian influenza (AI) affects birds, both domestic and wild. Being natural hosts, migratory birds can carry and shed the virus without showing clinical symptoms. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a devastating disease that is highly contagious and almost always fatal (except in ducks and geese).

Affected domestic birds include chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, and geese.

Signs of HPAI

1. Respiratory symptoms (gasping)
2. Diarrhea
3. Swelling of the head, neck, and eyes
4. Purple discoloration of head and legs
5. Tremors
6. Twisted necks
7. Paralyzed
8. Wings
9. Laying down and pedaling
10. Death

Preventing AI and HPAI

- ✓ Avoid attracting wild birds – keep poultry feed covered, clean any feed spills
- ✓ Limit travel to sales, shows, etc. with birds
 - If travel is necessary, separate new or returning birds from the flock for at least 30 days
- ✓ Wash hands and wear clean clothing before handling your birds if you've been in contact with other flocks
- ✓ Do not share equipment with neighbors

Reminder

Highly pathogenic avian influenza is a reportable disease, which means it is a very contagious or infectious disease with extreme consequences to animal welfare and product supply (per UMN Extension). If your flock has sudden, high death rates or birds with signs of HPAI, contact your veterinarian or the Minnesota Board of Animal Health immediately. Please use the Minnesota Avian Influenza Hotline at 1-833-454-0156.

What happens?

Stopping the spread of HPAI is of great importance. If a flock tests positive the birds are euthanized on farm. All flocks within a 6-mile radius of the confirmed case will be tested for HPAI and periodically rechecked throughout the outbreak. Birds are only destroyed if they are housed on the same premises as the infected individuals.

For more information on AI and HPAI,
please visit the University of Minnesota Extension website at:

<https://extension.umn.edu/poultry-health/avian-influenza-basics-noncommercial-poultry-flock-owners>

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