



Public Health
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PRESS RELEASE

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The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have confirmed a positive case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Taylor County, Iowa. The virus was found in commercial layer chickens.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a legally reportable, highly contagious, viral disease affecting bird populations. HPAI can travel in wild birds without those birds appearing sick, but is often fatal to domestic bird populations, including chickens and turkeys. The virus can spread through droppings or nasal discharge of an infected bird, which can contaminate dust and soil.

Signs of HPAI in domestic poultry include:

- Minor sneezing or coughing
- Minor discharge from eyes or beak
- Decreased food and water intake
- Decreased egg production
- Deformed eggs

If producers suspect signs of HPAI in their flocks, they should contact their veterinarian immediately. Possible cases should also be reported to the Iowa Department of Agriculture at (515) 281-5305.

According to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern. In rare cases when people and other mammals are infected with avian influenza viruses, it is usually during close contact with infected birds or their tissues. All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard flock owners, should continue to practice biosecurity and proper handwashing. Persons with flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, sneezing/swollen sinuses, sore throat, nasal discharge, difficulty breathing, or eye irritation/inflammation/drainage should avoid contact with any bird flock until resolved.

Poultry products remain safe to eat, though food handling practices are an important way to minimize potential spread of illness. Because pathogens can be found in meat and eggs, careful handling practices including handwashing are important in handling wild game or raw poultry as well as fully cooking poultry products to 165°F.

More information is available at: <https://iowaagriculture.gov/animal-industry-bureau/avian-influenza>

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