



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the situation?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratory has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Kentucky.

How is this identified?

Samples are collected and tested at a Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and confirmed for Highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) the H5N1 Eurasian Strain.

What is Avian Influenza?

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and is carried by free flying waterfowl such as ducks, geese and shorebirds. According to the CDC, avian influenza detections of this nature do not present an immediate public health concern.

Should consumers be worried if they have purchased poultry or chicken products?

Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk; poultry and eggs are safe to eat when handled and cooked properly. There is no issue with the food supply. There is little to no risk to humans themselves.

What is the risk to public health?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these avian influenza detections do not present an immediate public health concern. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F kills bacteria and viruses. For more information from the CDC, please visit the agency's [spotlight article](#).

What are the signs of high path avian influenza?

Some signs of HPAI include sudden death of poultry without clinical signs, respiratory signs (nasal discharge, coughing sneezing), a lack of energy or appetite, decreased egg production or soft-shelled or misshapen eggs.

How to contain the spread of this virus?

The Office of the State Veterinarian works closely with state and federal officials on incident response. Once a site tests positive for the virus, state officials quarantine the affected premise. Birds and eggs on affected premises will not enter the food system. A surveillance area is then identified around the affected premise in order to monitor for further incidents.

How long can this go on?

The virus has continued to circulate across the United States since initial confirmation in domestic poultry in February 2022. Experts predict an increase in detections this fall. So, we are going to increase surveillance and testing and keep the public informed.

What should poultry owners do?

In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State and Federal officials. You should report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to USDA through a toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.