

Thursday, February 16, 2023

The Virginia State Veterinarian announces the release of the control areas surrounding the two Rockingham County poultry farms that were affected by highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in January 2023. This control area release is effective February 16, 2023.

Following the detection of HPAI in Rockingham County, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) worked with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Veterinary Services (APHIS-VS) to establish control areas with a 10-kilometer radius around the affected facilities. Movement of domestic birds into and out of that control area required testing and permitting. Since then, VDACS Laboratory Services staff have performed repeated testing of all flocks in the control area to ensure that HPAI has not spread to other poultry flocks nearby. No additional samples tested positive for avian influenza, and testing is now complete.

With the release of the control area, there is no further requirement for permitting or enhanced surveillance testing. Routine pre-movement testing should continue. **However, it is important to continue to practice the highest practical levels of biosecurity, as the risk of HPAI in the environment remains high.** As a reminder, please keep the following in mind:

- Report a sudden increase in the number of sick birds or bird deaths to the State Veterinarian's office at (804) 692-0601 and/or USDA at 1-866-536-7593.
- Continue to [Practice Enhanced Biosecurity, utilizing a line of separation at each poultry house for poultry farmers.](#)
- Regularly disinfect all equipment used in coops or poultry houses and vehicles used for transporting birds.
- Prevent contact between wild birds and domestic poultry.
- Poultry farms should continue to follow the [Virginia Poultry Federation's Farm Visitor Guidelines.](#)
- Practice good biosecurity. [USDA Defend the Flock](#) has suggestions to follow.

For additional information or for questions, please contact the Office of the Virginia State Veterinarian at (804) 692-0601 or at vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov.

January 25, 2023

On Jan. 24, 2023, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) confirmed a second positive case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a commercial turkey flock in Rockingham County. Samples from the flock tested positive at the VDACS Regional Animal Health Laboratory in Harrisonburg, which is part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. Samples were also sent to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa for further confirmation. This detection is the second in the county with the [first detection occurring on Jan. 19, 2023.](#)

January 25, 2003 – CONTINUED

VDACS is working closely with the Virginia Poultry Federation, and USDA APHIS to provide a joint incident response. State officials have quarantined the affected premises and are performing additional surveillance and testing within a 10-kilometer radius around the affected properties. All birds on the affected properties have been depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. These birds will not enter the food system.

BACKGROUND

The Rockingham County HPAI detections are the first to occur in a commercial poultry flock since the current national outbreak began in January 2022. Since then, there have been six non-commercial backyard HPAI detections in Virginia.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds through nasal and eye secretions and manure. The virus can be spread through interaction between wild birds and domestic birds, flock to flock, equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. This virus affects poultry, like chickens, ducks, turkeys, and wild bird species such as ducks, geese, shorebirds, and raptors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to the general public from HPAI infections to be low. The proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F kills bacteria and viruses, including HPAI.

Anyone involved with poultry production in Virginia, from small backyard non-commercial flocks to large commercial operations, should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds and review their biosecurity activities. Biosecurity information is available at [USDA APHIS Defend the Flock](#).

IF YOU HAVE SICK POULTRY

Virginia bird owners should report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to the State Veterinarian's Office at (804) 692-0601 or at vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Media requests should be directed to michael.wallace@vdacs.virginia.gov.