

# TIMELY INFORMATION

## Agriculture & Natural Resources

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### **Minimizing Avian Influenza Risks in Backyard Poultry Flocks**

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The presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Asia, Europe and Africa is of concern. HPAI hasn't been found in any birds in North America for several years; however it is not unusual for migratory waterfowl to test positive for low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI). With this in mind, below are two principles that will help minimize the likelihood of your poultry being exposed to either LPAI or HPAI.

The two principles are **Isolation of the poultry and Traffic control to the farm.**

#### Isolation

- Keep the area around housed poultry clean, to remove possible shelter and food for AI carriers
- Prevent wild birds from coming into contact with your poultry. Most importantly waterfowl.
  - This can be accomplished by preventing the accumulation of free standing water near poultry pens or by limiting poultry access to free standing water, such as ponds.
  - Limit sources of food for wild birds.
- Minimize contact with other poultry, such as can be found at poultry shows and farmer markets. If contact with poultry is unavoidable, then proper sanitation is crucial to minimize the chance of accidental transmission.
  - If poultry are brought in they should be quarantined for at least two weeks before introducing them into your flock. If the birds exhibit any suspicious symptoms they should be kept in quarantine and treated or destroyed. A thorough sanitizing of this pen should then be performed.
- Avoid dead wild birds. Any found should be treated as if they are highly infectious.
  - Wear disposable gloves and place the carcass in a plastic bag for removal from the premises.

## Traffic Control

- Minimize farm to farm traffic.
  - This includes visits to other farms/swap meets/auctions. If unavoidable then proper biosecurity procedures should be performed. This includes changing of clothes, shoes and taking a shower or bath before coming into contact with your poultry.
  - Avoid transporting equipment from farm to farm. If this is unavoidable, thoroughly sanitize the equipment.
- Ask visitors if they have had recent contact with poultry.
- Supply clean protective foot coverings and overalls. Clothing and shoes are excellent methods for transporting AI.
- Dead bird disposal should be well outside the area that the poultry are allowed to roam in.
  - Minimize traffic to and from the dead bird disposal area

These are just some of the possible methods to minimize the threat of AI from being introduced into your flock. The most important thing to keep in mind is that preventing AI in your birds will require some thought and preventative measures on your part. Each farm/situation is unique and the above measures may not fully be applicable to your situations; however if there are any questions please contact one of the authors at 334 844 2610.