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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Michigan Backyard Flock; MDARD Urges Poultry Owners to Increase Biosecurity

February 24, 2022

LANSING, MI – Following an investigation by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) has confirmed the discovery of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a non-commercial backyard flock in Kalamazoo County. This detection shows that the virus is present in the environment and highlights the need for poultry owners to protect their flocks by increasing biosecurity.

After several birds from the affected flock died and others showed signs of illness, samples were sent to the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MSU VDL) for testing. The results from MSU VDL were then confirmed by NVSL.

"MDARD is always preparing for situations like this when they arise, which is why we were able to take quick action to contain this disease and help protect against its spread," said **MDARD Director Gary McDowell**. "At this time, this is an isolated case. There is no threat to public health or food safety. We do not anticipate any disruptions to supply chains across our state. As this situation develops, we will continue to work with our partners at local and federal levels to best mitigate spread and provide outreach."

To protect other flocks in Michigan, the premises is currently under quarantine, and the birds have been depopulated to prevent further disease spread.

Fortunately, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these HPAI detections [do not present an immediate public health concern](#). No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. Also, no birds or bird products infected with HPAI will enter the food chain. As a reminder, all poultry and eggs should be handled and cooked properly.

Avian influenza is a highly contagious virus that can be spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers.

Whether you have a few backyard birds or a large commercial flock, following these biosecurity measures can help protect Michigan's domestic birds:

- Preventing contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing them indoors or ensuring their outdoor area is fully enclosed.
- Washing your hands before and after handling birds as well as when moving between different coops.
- Disinfecting boots and other gear when moving between coops.
- Not sharing equipment or other supplies between coops or other farms.

- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and other supplies between uses. If it cannot be disinfected, discard it.
- Using well water or municipal water as drinking water for birds.
- Keeping poultry feed secure so there is no contact between the feed/feed ingredients and wild birds or rodents.

Poultry owners and caretakers should watch for unusual deaths, a drop in egg production, a significant decrease in water consumption, or an increase in sick birds. If avian influenza is **suspected**, contact MDARD **immediately** at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours).

"Now, with HPAI present in Michigan, it is critical for poultry owners to increase biosecurity measures and to keep wild birds out in order to protect their flocks. Increasing those measures will be important to ensure domestic birds are kept healthy and safe," said **State Veterinarian Dr. Nora Wineland**. "Simply put, no matter how many birds or which type of birds someone owns—now is the time to protect them. I'm asking all owners to sign-up for our email alerts so we can provide them with critical updates on this developing situation."

Individuals can subscribe to receive email notifications by visiting [MDARD's email sign-up website](#) and clicking on the "**Avian Influenza**" link. After entering a valid email address, subscribers will receive updates and alerts regarding the status of avian influenza in Michigan whenever there are new developments to report.

More information on [avian influenza](#) and how to [protect flocks through biosecurity measures](#) can be found on the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's website](#).

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