

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

HPAI in Poultry: What To Expect If You Suspect

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a serious poultry disease that spreads very quickly. With this threat, it's more important than ever for you to keep strict biosecurity measures at your poultry operations and watch your birds closely for any signs of the disease. We need you to quickly report problems in your flocks and work with us to respond. Your help will be vital in protecting the U.S. poultry industry from this deadly disease. The faster we can respond and depopulate sick birds, the faster we can stop the virus from spreading.

Be on the lookout for HPAI. Here's what to watch for, where to report, and what to expect from State and Federal responders if you have a suspected case in your birds.

Know the Warning Signs

- Sudden increase in bird deaths without any clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decrease in egg production
- Soft- or thin-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, comb, and legs
- Gasping for air (difficulty breathing)
- Coughing, sneezing, and/or nasal discharge (runny nose)
- Stumbling or falling down
- Diarrhea

Report It!

If your birds are sick or dying, report it right away. This is one of the most important things you can do to keep HPAI from spreading. Call:

- Your flock or local veterinarian,
- The State veterinarian,
- The State animal health/poultry diagnostic laboratory, or
- USDA toll-free at **1-866-536-7593**.



Complete paralysis

USDA file photo

HPAI is a deadly disease for poultry. It can infect all types of chickens and turkeys, plus many other kinds of birds. HPAI can strike suddenly and spread fast. It is devastating for poultry industries.



USDA file photo

Swelling of the tissue around the eyes and neck

What To Expect Next

After you report, a Federal or State animal health official will contact you to learn more about your flock and operation. If we suspect HPAI in your flock, response personnel will come to your operation quickly and work with you on the steps below.

Sample Collection

A Federal or State animal health official will take samples from live birds, dead birds, and/or your barn for testing. The samples then go to the closest diagnostic laboratory, and you can expect initial results within 24 hours. Until the results come back, we consider your operation a suspect HPAI case. This means we work with you to put measures in place that guard against any further disease spread.

Quarantine

The State will quarantine your facility. Only authorized workers are allowed in and out of your property, and the movement of poultry, poultry products, and equipment is also restricted. This is to help make sure the virus, if present, does not keep spreading.

Inventory

USDA will start working with you to inventory your poultry. If the laboratory confirms HPAI, this information helps us appraise your flock and provide the value of your depopulated birds. In order to receive indemnity, the owner or grower must certify that a biosecurity plan was in place prior to an HPAI detection. In 2016, APHIS issued an interim rule that allows for split payments between owners and contract growers. We will also offer a standard amount to cover costs for virus elimination activities at your operation (cleanup work).

If Your Flock Tests Positive for HPAI

If the test results are positive, a State or Federal veterinary medical officer (VMO) will notify you immediately. We will then assign a case manager who will be onsite to guide you through the next phase of the response and answer any questions you may have. Your case manager will work closely with you as we prepare to depopulate your flock and find out, as best we can, how HPAI may have entered your facility and if it has spread to any neighboring farms.

Our goal is to depopulate your flock within 24 hours of first detecting HPAI. This 24-hour window is critical. By acting quickly, we can keep the virus from building up in the environment and spreading further. We have several depopulation methods we can use to meet the 24-hour goal and will work with you to figure out the best option.

For More Information

More details about our response steps are available in “HPAI: A Guide To Help You Understand the Response Process.”

To download this document and find other resources on HPAI and emergency response, go to www.usda.gov/avianinfluenza.html, www.aphis.usda.gov/aminalhealth/defendtheflock and www.aphis.usda.gov/fadprep



USDA file photo
Twisting of the head and neck (torticollis)

FLOCK INVENTORY: WHAT INFO WILL I NEED?

To help speed the inventory process, you'll need to have the following information ready:

- Type of flock (turkey, chicken, layer, breeder, backyard, etc.)
- Age, sex, and number of each type of bird
- Number of barns and number of birds in each barn
- Bird mortality records
- Onset date of disease signs (if present)
- County where your farm is located
- GPS coordinates (latitude/longitude) and 911 address for your farm
- Name of your facility/complex
- Name of owner/manager



USDA file photo
Hemorrhaging of legs

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