



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK:
CONTACTS: MARTIN ZALUSKI (444-2043); TAHNEE SZYMANSKI (444-5214)

Avian Influenza Reported in domestic poultry from Judith Basin County

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been confirmed in chickens in Judith Basin County. This is the first case of HPAI reported in domestic poultry in Montana and comes less than a week after the disease was detected in a captive gyrfalcon in Flathead County.

Avian influenza is an infectious viral disease of birds that can cause high mortality rates in domestic flocks. Avian influenza viruses rarely cause clinical signs in wild waterfowl, although raptors and wild game birds (pheasants, quail, turkey, and grouse) may be more susceptible to HPAI. Avian influenza is a reportable disease in Montana. The presence of avian influenza in a country or region can have significant impacts on the trade of poultry products.

The poultry flock, which experienced increased mortality, was confirmed to have HPAI strain H5N2 at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, IA. The affected flock has been placed under quarantine and is required to be depopulated. Disposal of the birds will be done to prevent further spread of the disease.

The Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) is conducting an epidemiological investigation and will be identifying other poultry producers in the area to conduct disease surveillance and to provide educational resources. Owners of affected flocks are eligible to receive indemnity from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) considers the risk to people from these HPAI infections in wild birds, backyard flocks and commercial poultry, to be low. No human infections with the virus have been detected at this time.

Poultry producers should implement additional biosecurity measures including:

Limit visitor access to areas where birds are housed.

Prevent contact between wild or migratory birds and domestic poultry, including access by wild birds to feed and water sources.

Use dedicated clothing and protective footwear when caring for domestic poultry.

Immediately isolate sick animals and contact your veterinarian or MDOL.

MDOL encourages all poultry producers to immediately report sudden onset of illness or high death loss in domestic poultry (444-2043). Additional information on avian influenza can be found on the MDOL website at liv.mt.gov. For more information on biosecurity, please visit the USDA website at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.