



Avian Influenza Fact Sheet for Fairs and Exhibitions

Since December 2014, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus has affected nearly 39 million birds in 20 states that are found in three migratory flyways. The state of Montana has confirmed 2 cases of HPAI, a captive gyrfalcon in Flathead County and a backyard flock in Judith Basin County.

What is avian influenza (AI)?

AI is a viral disease that affects wild bird species and domestic poultry worldwide including chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, and other wild species. It is caused by an Influenza A virus which is divided into two groups: High Path (HP) and Low Path (LP) avian influenza. HP strains spread rapidly and often cause significant clinical disease and high death loss. LP strains are less severe and may even go unnoticed in infected birds.



How does my bird become infected?

Birds become infected with AI after contact with infected birds, or contaminated objects and equipment. This virus may also spread short distances through the air. Infection result following ingestion or inhalation of feces, saliva or other respiratory secretions from infected birds.

Are my birds at risk?

The primary source of the AI virus is migratory waterfowl. Domestic poultry with access to areas where infected wild or domestic birds have been are at increased risk of infection. Waterfowl can be infected with AI and spread the virus without showing clinical signs. Poultry owners should consider altering housing to prevent contact with wild birds.

How will I know if my bird has AI?

The clinical signs associated with AI include:

- Decreased feed intake
- Huddling
- Depression
- Coughing, sneezing (snicking)
- Ruffled feathers
- Diarrhea
- Excessive thirst
- Swollen and purple combs, wattles and legs
- Drop in egg production
- Neurologic signs (tremors and circling)
- Sudden death without other clinical signs

If any of these signs are observed, contact your veterinarian and the Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) immediately at 406-444-2043.

Am I at risk?

The human health risk associated with the current AI outbreak is considered to be low according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). There have been no reported cases of human illness since December

2014. It is also safe to eat properly prepared poultry and poultry products. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that poultry and wild birds are cooked to a temperature of 165 °F.

What can I do to protect my animals?

The best way to protect your birds is to avoid contact with wild birds and areas known to have housed infected birds. Good biosecurity helps keep birds healthy!

- Isolate new introductions and birds returning from exhibitions for at least 2 weeks to prevent the introduction of disease into your flock.
- Isolate sick animals from other birds in your flock.
- Wear protective clothing when working with sick birds (gloves, mask, coveralls, and boots).
- Do not travel with birds from a premises with unexplained death loss.
- Limit, monitor, and record any movement of people, vehicles, or animals on or off your farm.
- Wash and disinfect items going on and off your farm, such as footwear, vehicles and equipment. Effective disinfectants include bleach, Comet bathroom cleanser, Lysol multi-purpose cleaner, Virkon, and Tek-Trol.
- Provide clean feed and water that was not accessible by wild birds.
- Do not borrow equipment or supplies from another poultry owner.
- Poultry owners who also own pigs should house the two separately.

Housing recommendations to consider include:

- Confining birds in a coop or barn
- Incorporate solid roofing over a caged area
- Small mesh barrier fencing to decrease direct contact with wild birds on the ground.

Who should I contact?

If you observe sickness or increased death loss in your birds, immediately call your veterinarian and MDOL at 406-444-2043.

Where can I get more information?

1. USDA Biosecurity Guide for Poultry and Bird Owners:
www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/pub_bioguide_poultry_bird.pdf
USDA
2. USDA Biosecurity:
www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/
3. Poultry Manual- Cleaning and Disinfection of Facilities, Equipment, and Vehicles:
www.cfsph.iastate.edu/pdf/fad-prepnahems-poultry-industry-manual



References:

USDA-APHIS. Biosecurity Tips: 6 Ways to Prevent Poultry Disease. July 2013. <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>

USDA. USDA Avian influenza Fact Sheet. 2015. (May 2015): http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=avian_influenza.html

Iowa State University. Fast Facts Avian Influenza Bird Flu. 2008. The Center for Food Security and Public Health. (May 2015): <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/disease.php?name=avian-influenza>