



## LIVINGSTON COUNTY Health Department

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Avian Influenza Identified in Backyard Flock**

HOWELL, Michigan. - (April 15, 2022) Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been confirmed in a small backyard flock of birds in Livingston County. No human illness has been identified and all individuals potentially exposed to the birds have been contacted. Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) is sharing this information to alert people who own or work with birds, including poultry, to the possibility of infection and to recommend precautions. HPAI in birds is not a food safety concern. You cannot get avian influenza by eating properly cooked poultry products.

Both wild and domestic birds, including chickens, can be infected with avian influenza viruses. HPAI spreads easily among birds and – while rare –can spread from birds to people. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to people from HPAI viruses to be low. To date, no human HPAI infections have been detected in the United States. Spread of avian flu viruses from a bird to a person mainly happens through droplets, the same way that human flu viruses spread. Exposed individuals should watch for symptoms of influenza for 10 days after their last contact with infected birds. Similar to seasonal influenza illness in humans, avian influenza viruses can be treated using influenza antiviral drugs. These medications work better the sooner they are given. If you suspect you may be ill, please contact LCHD by calling 517-546-9850.

Birds or flocks infected with HPAI may not show routine signs of illness. Sudden death is a major indicator of HPAI. Sick birds may also experience:

- Significant drop in water consumption
- Lack of appetite, energy, or vocalization
- Drop in egg production
- Diarrhea
- Swollen comb, wattles, legs, or head
- Nasal discharge, sneezing or coughing

-more-

- Abnormal behavior, like difficulty walking

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) urges poultry owners to increase biosecurity precautions. Biosecurity measures can include:

- Minimizing the number of people coming in contact with 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, clothing, 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.

Residents who notice the death of three or more free-ranging birds should report it to the DNR through the Eyes in the Field site (<https://bit.ly/37SLBm3>) or by calling 517-336-5030. If your domestic poultry is experiencing severe illness or multiple death losses, contact MDARD at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours).

For more information about avian influenza, go to [Michigan.gov/BirdFlu](http://Michigan.gov/BirdFlu), [Michigan.gov/AvianInfluenza](http://Michigan.gov/AvianInfluenza) or [Michigan.gov/AvianDiseases](http://Michigan.gov/AvianDiseases).

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