

BACKYARD POULTRY HEALTH ALERT

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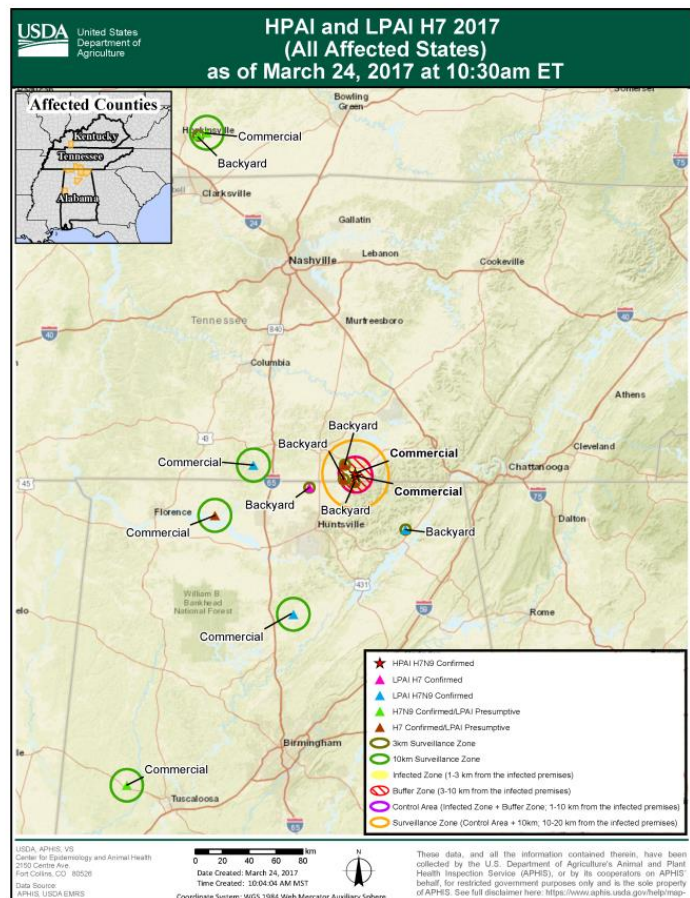
Mississippi Board of Animal Health



Help Protect Mississippi Poultry

Situation

Due to outbreak of Avian Influenza (AI) in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia there is a need for increased biosecurity for poultry producers. The outbreak started March 4, 2017 with detection of AI in commercial poultry in the Chattooga, TN area. Since that time Alabama has had five positive flocks (three commercial and two backyard). Tennessee has had two highly pathogenic AI (HPAI) commercial flocks and one low pathogenic AI (LPAI) commercial flock. KY has one commercial and one backyard flock, and Georgia has had one commercial flock positive for LPAI.



Please help protect our poultry here in Mississippi by practicing biosecurity and by not purchasing birds brought illegally into Mississippi

Basic Avian Influenza Information

Avian influenza (AI), also known as “bird flu,” is a viral disease affecting birds. The virus infects domestic poultry, such as chickens, turkeys, quail, and geese, and wild birds, such as shorebirds and waterfowl. AI viruses are divided into two groups—highly pathogenic (HPAI) and low pathogenic (LPAI)—based on the ability of the virus to produce disease and the severity of illness it can cause. HPAI spreads rapidly and has a high death rate in birds. LPAI causes only minor illness and occurs naturally in migratory waterfowl. The concern is that some LPAI virus strains are capable of mutating into HPAI viruses. Most of the current outbreaks are from LPAI, which means the birds may only be sick for a few days, and may not show symptoms of illness. The virus is just as dangerous, however, because it can mutate from low pathogenic to highly pathogenic when it is spread from chicken to chicken. Therefore, it is important to keep both LPAI and HPAI versions of the disease from spreading.

Poultry Protective Measures

- Avian influenza virus is carried by migratory waterfowl, mainly ducks, so it is important to keep poultry away from areas where wild ducks congregate
- It is also important that you don't bring the virus from areas where wild ducks congregate back to your poultry farms
- If you purchase poultry or are somewhere poultry are being sold or exhibited, please be aware that these are high risk
- To be legal, out of state poultry must be from an NPIP AI Clean program or have a negative Avian Influenza test prior to entering the state. Most of the poultry being offered for sale on social media are not legal for sale here in Mississippi

Human Health

No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States, Canada, or internationally, and there is no immediate public health concern. It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry products, including meat and eggs. Even if poultry and eggs were to be contaminated with the virus, proper cooking would kill it.

More Information

For more information, see the Mississippi Board of Animal Health's AI website at www.hpai.ms.gov and the Mississippi State University Extension Service's website at <http://www.extension.msstate.edu/avian-flu>.