



Mississippi Board of Animal Health

James A. Watson, D.V.M.
State Veterinarian

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highly Pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza Diagnosed in Mississippi Poultry Flock

Contacts:

msstatevet@mdac.ms.gov

JACKSON (5 November 2022)—The Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH) has been notified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Veterinary Services Laboratory that poultry from a commercial breeder chicken flock in Lawrence County tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza. Samples from the flock were tested at the Mississippi Veterinary Research & Diagnostic Laboratory, part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and confirmed at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. The USDA announcement can be found at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2022/hpai-ms.

Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk; poultry and eggs are safe to eat when handled and cooked properly. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the public health risk associated with these avian influenza detections in birds remains low. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of all poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F is recommended as a general food safety precaution.

SITUATION: The State Veterinarian has quarantined the affected premises, and birds on the property have been depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. Birds from the flock have not entered the food system. The MBAH is working closely with federal animal health officials on a joint incident response.

The MBAH is actively working with the industry to increase monitoring of flocks statewide. This finding is the first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial poultry in Mississippi. In October, American blue-winged teal tested positive with HPAI in Issaquena County. The poultry industry was notified and put on high alert to increase biosecurity and surveillance for HPAI.

REPORTING: Hobby poultry owners are encouraged to practice good biosecurity and be aware of the signs of avian influenza and report illness and/or death in the MBAH Online Reporting Form <https://agnet.mdac.ms.gov/MBAHReportableDiseases/publicreportingform>. Information will be routed to a state or federal veterinarian in Mississippi for assessment. Dead birds should be double-bagged and refrigerated for possible testing. Signs include sudden death without clinical

signs; lack of energy or appetite; decreased egg production; soft-shelled or misshapen eggs; swelling or purple discoloration of head, eyelids, comb, hocks; nasal discharge; coughing; sneezing; incoordination; and diarrhea. A resource for backyard bird health information is online at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-resources/df-resources>.

UPDATES and INFORMATION: Situation updates and status reports about ongoing avian influenza activities in Mississippi, along with critical disease-related information, is posted online at www.mbah.ms.gov. Detailed information and resources can be found on the MBAH Avian Influenza page at hpa.ms.gov. Users may subscribe to email updates on a link on that site.

CONTACT FOR MEDIA: Beth Adcock, beth@mdac.ms.gov, 769-798-3137