



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of Marketing, Animal Industries and Consumer Services

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Kevin M. Atticks, Secretary
Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Animal Health

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry
mda.maryland.gov

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

410-841-5810 Baltimore/Washington
410-841-5999 Fax

January 6, 2025

Dear Maryland Poultry Producers,

On Friday, January 3, 2025, the Delaware Department of Agriculture announced that preliminary testing of a commercial broiler flock in Kent County, Delaware, returned a presumptive positive result for H5 avian influenza, identified by the University of Delaware's Lasher Laboratory in Georgetown, which is part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. Additional testing by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) confirmed the presence of the virus.

The affected premises are currently under quarantine and the birds on the property were depopulated to prevent further spread of the disease.

H5N1 detections in migrating wild birds also continues. On January 2, 2025, the Maryland Department of Agriculture confirmed that several snow geese found in Bishopville, MD and the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge were infected with H5 avian influenza. Additionally, Delaware authorities confirmed that snow geese found sick or dead on December 27, 2024, in Sussex County were also infected with H5 avian influenza. These are the first confirmed cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in wild birds in the Delmarva region since May 2022, when black vultures in Harford County tested positive through wildlife surveillance.

These recent detections should act as a reminder that a virulent strain of Avian Influenza virus continues to circulate in the wild bird population and continues to be introduced into commercial and backyard poultry throughout the United States. As of January 3, 2025, HPAI has been detected in 1,377 flocks, including 808 commercial poultry farms and 514 backyard flocks, across all 50 states.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture strongly recommends that organic poultry producers move their flocks indoors and keep them confined until the risk of outdoor access can be reassessed. It is also advised that producers who observe black vultures or wild waterfowl near their poultry flocks keep their birds indoors. Any sightings of dead black vultures or wild waterfowl should be reported to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources or USDA Wildlife Services.

Producers are urged to implement rigorous biosecurity measures, monitor bird health closely, and report any unexplained mortality or morbidity in their flocks to the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5810 (available 24/7).

Thank you,

Dr. Jennifer P Trout, DVM
Maryland State Veterinarian