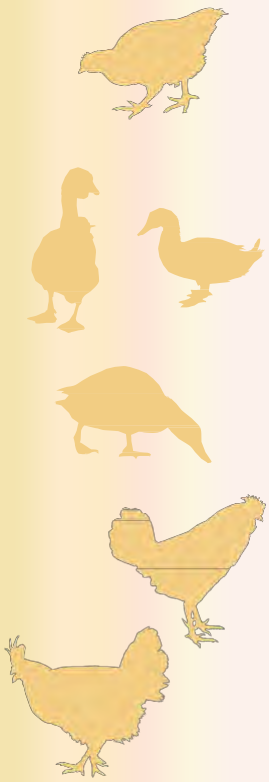
Biosecurity for Birds:

AVIAN INFLUENZA

Avian influenza (AI), or "bird flu," is a contagious disease that can infect all types of birds. All bird owners should be aware of the AI basics, what you can do to help prevent the disease, and the steps to take if you suspect your birds may have it. After all, you are the best protection your birds have.

Know the Signs of AI

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Thin-shelled, soft-shelled, or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, comb, and legs
- Nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing
- Lack of coordination
- Diarrhea



How AI Spreads

AI spreads quickly by bird-to-bird contact. AI virus can travel on manure, egg flats, crates, other farming materials or equipment, and people who have picked up the virus on their clothing, shoes, or hands. Migratory waterfowl can also carry the disease.

Practice Backyard Biosecurity

To help prevent disease from spreading:

- Restrict traffic onto and off of your property.
- Disinfect shoes, clothes, hands, egg trays or flats, crates, vehicles, and tires.
- Avoid visiting other poultry farms or bird owners. If you do, be sure to change clothes and clean your hands and shoes before entering your own bird area.

Media representatives may contact:

Public Affairs
USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
(301) 851-4100

Vaccines

In the United States, vaccination against AI is not routine, nor is it our first choice for dealing with an outbreak. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is not common in our country—it is considered an exotic disease here. If HPAI is detected in U.S. poultry, APHIS will work with the States to respond and quickly eliminate it.

While AI vaccines reduce outward signs of the disease in birds, they do not prevent birds from becoming infected. If used, vaccines can help slow the spread of AI to protect healthy birds outside a quarantine area. But vaccines cannot eliminate the disease itself.

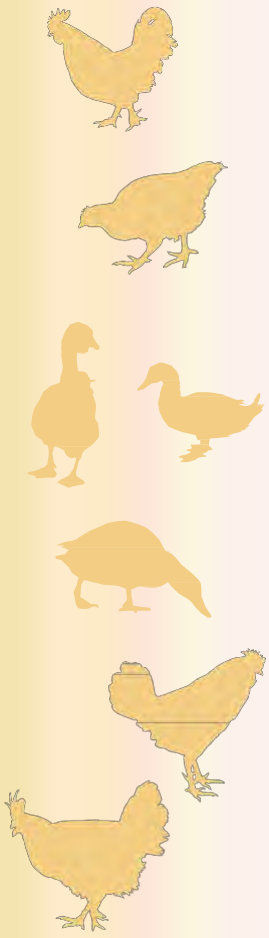
Vaccination is, therefore, one tool we can use as part of our overall eradication strategy, along with many other actions needed to stop an HPAI outbreak: quarantines and animal movement restrictions, emergency euthanasia and depopulation of animals, cleaning and disinfection at affected locations, surveillance to detect any disease spread, and proper biosecurity.

If approved for use during an outbreak, vaccination would be directed by Federal officials.

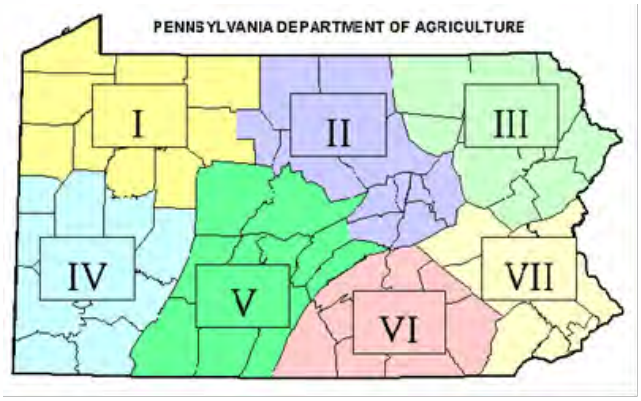
Smart Practices When Buying Birds

To help be certain your new birds are healthy, here are a few simple steps you can follow:

- Buy from a reputable dealer,
- Request certification from suppliers that birds were legally imported,
- Maintain records of all sales and shipments of flocks,
- Keep new birds separated from your flock for at least 30 days, and
- Keep young and old birds and birds of different species and from different sources apart.



Report Sick Birds



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Region II	570-433-2640
Region III	570-836-2181
Region IV	724-832-1073
Region V	814-793-1849
Region VI	717-346-3223
Region VII	610-489-1003
After hours	717-772-2852