



For Immediate Release
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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Dallas County Birds

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a non-commercial mixed species backyard flock (non-poultry) in Dallas County, Texas.

Following the observation of sick birds and bird deaths in the flock, samples were tested at the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory and confirmed at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa on September 24. The USDA has designated this backyard flock as non-poultry because the birds are from a single household that does not have direct or indirect contact with poultry or poultry facilities.

The TAHC is working closely with federal animal health officials on a joint incident response. State officials quarantined the affected premises, and birds on the property will be depopulated to prevent the spread of disease. The plan for the control of avian influenza includes coordination of resources and response, and protocols for quarantine, testing, disposal, cleaning, disinfection and monitoring.

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.

“Protecting animal health is our top priority,” said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian. “The TAHC and USDA are committed to moving quickly and vigilantly to prevent the further spread of this virus.”

As part of existing avian influenza response plans, Federal and State partners are working jointly on additional surveillance and testing in areas around the affected flock. The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, and the TAHC and USDA are working to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations.

“While Texas has only seen HPAI in two domestic flocks, over 46 million birds across 40 states have been affected throughout this 2022 HPAI outbreak,” said Dr. Schwartz. “With migratory birds traveling across Texas, it is important that poultry owners stay diligent and practice strong biosecurity to protect their flocks from avian influenza.”



Anyone involved with poultry production from the small backyard to the large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds. Owners of commercial and backyard poultry flocks are encouraged to:

- Closely observe and report a sudden increase in the number of sick birds or bird deaths to the TAHC at 1-800-550 8242 and/or USDA at 1-866-536-7593.
- Practice good [biosecurity](#) with your poultry flock.
- Create barriers to prevent contact with wild birds.
- Consider bringing birds indoors, when possible, to prevent exposures.
- Avoid visits to other premises that also have birds.
- Find additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks at https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_AI-BiosecurityPoultry.pdf.

For the latest on the Texas HPAI response, visit <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency/avianinfluenza.html>.

Additional poultry resources:

- TAHC Poultry Health page: https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/poultry/#AI
- 2022 United States detections of HPAI: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-commercial-backyard-flocks>
- USDA Defend the Flock biosecurity: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-diseaseinformation/avian!/ut/p/z1/04_iUIDgAgL9CCADyIQSuGj9qLzEssz0xJLM_LzEHP0l_cg0s3hPlyNnQ0MTQx93L0sLg0BnYwPT0AB342BDc30v_Sj8CsKd9CMDE91DSgP1C7KjHAEOf87B/

Additional background:

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and is carried by free flying waterfowl such as ducks, geese and shorebirds. AI viruses are classified by a combination of two groups of proteins: hemagglutinin or “H” proteins, of which there are 16 (H1–H16), and neuraminidase or “N” proteins, of which there are 9 (N1–N9). Many different combinations of “H” and “N” proteins are possible. Each combination is considered a different subtype and can be further broken down into different strains which circulate within flyways/geographic regions. AI viruses are further classified by their pathogenicity (low or high)—the ability of a particular virus strain to produce disease in domestic poultry.

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals “from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character.” TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.