

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Several of you have already received calls from producers, the general public and the news media regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is taking the lead on this issue, with N.C. Cooperative Extension helping to coordinate resources and facilitate communications.

We're working to prepare our people to handle requests in a way that supports our state's overall direction and response to avian flu. The strongest, most impactful message is a consistent message.

We've developed a webpage with information to help you as you talk with the news media, the public or your local producers about avian flu: <http://go.ncsu.edu/avianflu>

News Media Interview Tips

In answering media questions about this topic, remember the following:

- 1. Be prepared.** Even when a reporter calls for a quick phone interview, you don't need to take that call cold. Buy a few minutes to gather your thoughts. Focus on the talking points outlined below. The tip sheet at <http://go.ncsu.edu/getyourmessageacross> provides a few key things to keep in mind when preparing for media interviews.
- 2. Stick to what you know.** Do not venture into information where you have no expertise, but refer media to other agents or specialists who may have the information (an experts list is included at the end of this handout).
- 3. Direct reporters to the NCDA&CS website — <http://ncagr.gov/avianflu>** for updates and regulatory information, and remember that regulatory information is not our area of expertise.
- 4. Get the reporter's name,** their media outlet and their email and phone number.
This will help you know whom to contact if you need to update the information you've given.

For assistance in working with the news media, contact:

Justin Moore, Director of Marketing and Communications, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service
justin_moore@ncsu.edu or **919-515-1371**

Suzanne Stanard, News Editor, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Communications
suzanne_stanard@ncsu.edu or **919-513-3126**

Dee Shore, Media Specialist, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Communications
dee_shore@ncsu.edu or **919-513-3117**

Talking Points for Extension Agents on Avian Flu

- > There is no evidence that humans can be infected with this strain of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).
- > The U.S. has the best surveillance system in the world for HPAI.
- > North Carolina has not had HPAI to date.
- > If detected, HPAI infected flocks will not enter the food chain so poultry meat and eggs will continue to be healthy, wholesome food products.
- > People who own backyard or pastured poultry should keep them contained (away from wild birds) during September and October.
- > Poultry should have no access to surface water during the fall migration (September and October).
- > Families that have poultry, ducks or quail should advise their children about biosecurity. Children should avoid contact with poultry, ducks or quail outside the home — at friends' houses, petting zoos, etc. If children do come in contact with birds on another premises, they should wash thoroughly and avoid wearing those same clothes around their own birds.

Handling a Suspected Case of Avian Flu

The following are not talking points for the news media, but rather valuable guidance to provide producers.

If highly pathogenic avian influenza is suspected, pertinent information should be immediately reported by telephone to NCDA&CS, Animal Health Programs, at 919-733-7601.

- > NCDA&CS Diagnostic Labs. There are four locations ranging from the mountains to Raleigh that can test birds for avian flu. Contact the Animal Health Programs number above first.

Key Resources

Organizations across North Carolina and beyond have developed educational resources regarding avian flu. We encourage you to review the following sites for a more comprehensive understanding and other materials.

- > NCDA&CS Veterinary Division: www.ncagr.gov/avianflu/industry.htm
- > Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN): <http://eden.lsu.edu/Topics/AgDisasters/AvianFlu/Pages/default.aspx>
- > NC State Prestage Department of Poultry: <http://harvest.cals.ncsu.edu/prestage-poultry-science>

NC State Experts to Help Address the Issue

Donna Carver is an Extension veterinarian in the Prestage Department of Poultry Science. She can address the basics of avian flu, how it affects poultry, and how to protect flocks from contracting the virus.

donna_carver@ncsu.edu
919-515-5526

Matt Koci is an associate professor of poultry science and a virologist who studies a number of viruses including avian flu.

mdkoci@ncsu.edu
919-515-5388

Edgar Oviedo is a veterinarian and associate professor of poultry science. He can speak on the clinical signs of H5N2 and is fluent in Spanish.

eooviedo@ncsu.edu
919-515-5391

Tomislav Vukina is a professor of agricultural and resource economics. He can address the economic effect of widespread H5N2 on the poultry industry.

tom_vukina@ncsu.edu
919-515-5864

Mike Walden is an Extension economist and professor of agricultural and resource economics. He can address the economic impact of avian flu on consumers.

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