



AVIAN FLU

—STAY INFORMED—

■ Fast Facts About Avian Flu ■

Current Information as of June 8, 2006

Poultry Shows

Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses, which occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide, acting as reservoirs, carry a normally harmless form of flu viruses in their intestines, and wild birds usually do not get sick from them. Unlike most avian influenza viruses, however, a new strain of H5N1 has caused mortality in more than 80 species of wild birds. Avian influenza can be very contagious among domestic poultry, and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

Avian influenza has not yet been found in any birds in North or South America. Even so, necessary precautions should be taken to lessen the chance that birds become infected.

For instance, being familiar with the logistics and threats of this virus could prove worthwhile to those who will be showing poultry at summer shows or at the county and state fairs.

- **Avian influenza is a virus that is naturally occurring in birds.** Wild birds carry this virus but are for the most part immune to its effects. The virus is very contagious among birds and affects many domestic birds including chickens, ducks and turkeys.
- **Currently, there are no specific regulations for 4-H poultry shows at county and state fairs.** This would likely change if/when avian flu is found in the U.S. It is possible that shows, swaps, auctions and fairs could be cancelled in the event of a local outbreak.
- All birds at shows and fairs must participate in the NPIP (National Poultry Improvement Plan) testing that has been used for years. This testing is for *Salmonella pullorum*, and not avian influenza.
- Although not regulated, the following guidelines should be considered when judging county, state and rural poultry shows:

1. A judge should know that they should never visit a local farm during the length of the show.

They should also remember that their own birds can be a source of disease as well as the shows from which they have returned. It is also mandatory that a judge must never schedule two shows in the same day. Most disease agents don't last long without a bird host, so allowing time between events helps lessen the chance of spreading a disease agent. All clothing, judging smocks and shoes should be laundered before attending another show.

2. Before judging, a general survey of the health status of the birds in the shows should be conducted. Birds that show signs of sickness or heavy infestation of parasites should be disqualified, and the poultry superintendent should be notified.

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- **Hand washing is one way to avoid and reduce the chance of transferring diseases from bird to bird.** Some of the new water-free hand-washing gels are good safety measures if a wash basin is not available.
- **The poultry industry has effectively dealt with the avian flu in the past.** It is not new to the poultry industry. The U.S. government has had controls in place for many years to make sure that infected birds do not reach the consumer food supply.
- **Cooking poultry to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F kills the virus.**
- **The current strain of avian flu is transmitted primarily between bird species.** Cases found in human and animal species have resulted from direct or close contact with infected birds.
- **The spread of avian flu from one infected person to another has been reported very rarely,** and has not been reported to continue beyond one person.
- **Once infected, birds shed the virus through their saliva, nasal secretions and feces.** Birds in contact with these agents can have a mortality rate of 90-100% within 48 hours of infection. Humans may contract the avian flu through direct contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated.
- **Migratory patterns suggest that the avian flu will reach the U.S. and Great Plains regions by fall 2006.** Families with backyard chickens, and larger scale poultry producers should familiarize themselves with the symptoms of avian influenza.

If you need help with poultry testing information or locating a poultry tester, visit

<http://www.asi.ksu.edu/avianflu>

or

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

For current information and updates, contact:

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