

Avian influenza

Information for Yukon poultry producers

Last updated: May 27, 2022

This document is for Yukon bird owners, back yard flocks and poultry producers; this is an update in addition to the information about [Avian Influenza – information for poultry producers in the Yukon](#)

What is new?

Samples from wild birds found dead in southern Yukon have tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The H5N1 strain detected in these two cases is the same strain involved in the current North American outbreak of avian influenza.

Why is this important?

If domestic birds get HPAI they will die or become gravely ill. Early in their illness, infected birds may show:

- lack of energy, movement or appetite;
- decreased egg production;
- swelling around the head, neck and eyes;
- coughing, gasping for air or sneezing;
- nervous signs, tremors or lack of coordination;
- diarrhea; and
- sudden death.

Symptoms progress to death in 24 to 48 hours and mortality among those infected is near 100 per cent.

What should I do if my birds are sick or I find some of my birds dead?


Contact your veterinarian or the Animal Health Unit at 867-667-5600 or animalhealth@yukon.ca.

You can also report the illness or death using the reportable hazard form on Yukon.ca: [Animal Health Unit: reportable hazard report | Government of Yukon](#).

Why should I contact the government about this?

When a strain of avian influenza is designated 'highly pathogenic' it means that it will kill most of the infected birds. We ask that you contact the Animal Health Unit at animalhealth@yukon.ca or 867-667-5600 as soon as you suspect avian influenza in your flock. Government of Yukon officials can place a quarantine order immediately. This will prevent spread of the virus. Once a quarantine order is in place, you become eligible for compensation from Government of Yukon programs.

The federal government will also respond to cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza and Yukon government officials will work with them to support the poultry industry in the Yukon.

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What is the purpose of a quarantine order and how does it affect my neighbours?

A quarantine order provides instruction on containing the virus and minimizing its spread and allows the government to issue compensation.

The goal of a quarantine order is to contain the virus and minimize its spread. In some situations, a surveillance area or control zone will be needed around an infected premise to contain the risk of the virus spreading.

If my birds do not die from avian influenza will they need to be destroyed?

Yes, federal legislation requires domestic birds with avian influenza be destroyed. It is also the humane thing to do because affected domestic birds suffer severe symptoms.

How can I protect my birds from getting avian influenza?

Protecting poultry means doing everything you can to lessen the chance that you (or others) bring AI to the birds on your clothing, boots, hands or equipment, or by bringing in new birds that are already infected. You also need to protect your poultry from direct contact with wild birds or contact with areas where wild birds have been. To understand how to protect poultry it is important to understand how the birds could be exposed to Avian Flu.

- Exposure to the virus can happen:
 - 1) via contact with wild birds or contact with areas where wild birds have been;
 - 2) via movement of poultry or poultry products from one premises to another, and;
 - 3) via clothing, boots, hands or equipment that has been in contact with wild birds or other domestic birds.
- To protect your domestic birds:
 - Prevent wild birds from being in contact with your poultry and their food and water by keeping your birds indoors or using overhead netting and appropriate fencing;
 - Frequently clean poultry coops, water dishes, feeders, and your clothing and boots;
 - Learn to recognize the signs of avian influenza in your birds:
 - Lack of energy, movement or appetite;
 - Decreased egg production;
 - Swelling around the head, neck and eyes;
 - Coughing, gasping for air or sneezing;
 - Nervous signs, tremors, or lack of coordination;
 - Diarrhea; and
 - Sudden death.
 - Limit visitors to your farm;
 - Do not move birds from one farm to another;
 - Do not house birds with swine;
 - Avoid having bird feeders / duck ponds close to poultry barns as it attracts wild birds; and
 - Protect yourself and your farm workers by wearing PPE when working with sick birds.
- Read the [National Avian On-Farm Biosecurity Standard](#).

I keep chickens for my family to have eggs or sometimes share with the neighbours, should I contact the government if my birds are sick?

Yes. If your birds get avian influenza, and a quarantine order is issued, you become eligible for compensation. If you have been moving birds or bird products from your farm to other farms, territorial or federal government may place an order on a radius around your property and other farms with poultry may also have to quarantine.

Can avian influenza affect other animals on my farm?

Yes. Mammals can get influenza viruses. Pigs can get influenza and some influenza viruses are adapted to pigs, earning the name swine influenza or swine flu. Dogs and cats (as well as foxes and other mammals) are susceptible to influenza viruses and they get the virus from scavenging dead bird carcasses. Housing for pigs and birds needs to be separate to ensure the viruses do not pass from one species to the other. Bird carcasses must be kept away from scavengers.

