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Georgia Department of Agriculture

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March 23, 2017

UPDATE: Avian Influenza (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI)

To: All Georgia Poultry Producers

From: Robert M. Cobb, Jr., DVM
State Veterinarian

- **SUSPENSION OF POULTRY ASSEMBLY, effective March 16, 2017, REMAINS IN EFFECT: Effective immediately all poultry exhibitions, shows, sales (flea markets, auction markets), swaps, and meets in the State of Georgia are suspended until further notice.**
- **Avian Influenza (HPAI or LPAI) has NOT been found in Georgia poultry.**
- This temporary suspension prohibits the concentration, collection, or assembly of poultry and poultry products of all types from one or more premises for purposes of sale, exhibition, show, swap or meet. Reducing the assembly and commingling of poultry is the most effective way to practice strict biosecurity measures in our state.
- The suspension includes all live poultry and poultry products. The definition of poultry and poultry products can be found in Georgia Department of Agriculture Rule 40-13-2-.15 (7) at <http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/GAC/40-13-2-.15>.
- The suspension does not restrict importation of poultry or poultry products provided all Georgia import requirements are met prior to importation. You may find Interstate Movement Health Requirements in Georgia Department of Agriculture Rule 40-2-13 at <http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/GAC/40-13-2-.15>. The suspension does not restrict out-of-state export of poultry and poultry products. All exports must meet the requirements of the state or country of destination.
- The suspension does not affect private sales of poultry and poultry products.

- Shipments of eggs or baby chicks from National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Avian Influenza (AI) Clean facilities directly to approved Georgia facilities for sale to the public are not affected by this suspension. Biosecurity measures and information should be in place and in practice at approved facilities.
- Eggs and baby chicks offered for sale that do not come from NPIP AI Clean facilities to the point of sale and/or eggs and baby chicks that move from an NPIP AI Clean facility directly to an unapproved facility and then are offered for resale are suspended temporarily.

ACTION:

Due to recent and additional confirmations and ongoing investigations of Avian Influenza in Tennessee, Alabama and now in Kentucky, and in an effort to minimize the risk of introduction of HPAI (or LPAI) into our Georgia poultry flocks, it is recommended for all Georgia Poultry Producers and Enthusiasts (commercial and backyard) to observe the following:

1. Implement **STRICT BIOSECURITY** on all poultry premises. Alert all company personnel, growers, farm workers and service personnel of the increased risk of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Focus biosecurity methods on preventing any exposure to wild waterfowl or their droppings. Keep up your biosecurity **AT ALL TIMES**, especially as it relates to **ESSENTIAL** visitors and **ENTRY** biosecurity.
2. All outdoor poultry should be moved into bio-secure housing and any contact with wild birds of any kind, especially waterfowl, their habitat, or their droppings should be avoided. If this is not possible, the Georgia Department of Agriculture should be notified.
3. In addition to wild birds, prevent the introduction of Avian Influenza by other animals (rodents, snakes, dogs, etc.) and fomites (inanimate objects: buckets, boots, rakes, cages, trailers, trucks, equipment of any kind). These non-avian animals and fomites can be a vehicle to transmit the virus into your flock. Remember, **BIOSECURITY – AT ALL TIMES!**
4. If you use rendering for dead poultry disposal, please verify that the trucks are disinfected at each pick up and that the freezer area is kept clean and clutter free. If you use rendering pick up for livestock, please do the same. If you visit a rendering plant for any livestock, clean and disinfect your vehicle before returning to your farm.
5. Take the necessary precautions around any congregation points for growers or backyard owners – do not bring disease back to your poultry. All poultry owners and producers should strictly adhere to the biosecurity guidelines mentioned above. During this time, backyard flock owners should refrain from moving birds offsite or introducing new birds.
6. Closely monitor all flocks for increased mortality or clinical signs consistent with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Report any sick birds or concerns immediately. The consistent clinical sign in all the current reported cases to this point has been a marked rapid increase in mortality over several days.

7. Enroll in the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). Information on NPIP can be found at: <https://www.gapoultrylab.org/npip/>.
8. Please contact the HPAI HOTLINE for reporting of any sick birds or for questions related to HPAI.

Georgia Department of Agriculture www.ga-ai.org (855) 491-1432
Georgia Poultry Laboratory www.gapoultrylab.org (770) 766-6850

CURRENT EVENTS:

Update

- On March 21, 2017, Alabama, low pathogenic avian influenza was confirmed in a commercial flock in Pickens County. This commercial flock has been placed under quarantine. In addition, a backyard flock located in Madison County has also been confirmed positive for low pathogenic H7N9 avian influenza (LPAI) by NVSL. Surveillance zones have been put in place surrounding the locations in both Pickens and Madison counties.
- On March 20, 2017, Kentucky, H7N9 low pathogenic avian influenza was confirmed in samples taken from Christian County premises in a commercial flock. The flock has been depopulated and surveillance is on-going.
- On March 16, 2017, Alabama, a previous investigation was confirmed positive with H7N9 LPAI. The sample was obtained at a flea market located in Jackson County. The premise of origin for the guinea fowl, also located in Jackson County, Alabama, is under quarantine and continued surveillance. The guinea fowl in question have been depopulated.
- On March 15, 2017, Tennessee State Veterinarian issued a Poultry Health Advisory urging all poultry owners to take extra precautions to protect their flocks from illness.
- On March 14, 2017, Alabama issued an official Order Prohibiting Poultry Exhibitions and the Assembling of Poultry to Be Sold. **This order remains in effect.** The order prohibits: all poultry exhibitions, sales at regional and county fairs, festivals, swap meets, live bird markets, flea markets and auctions. The order also prohibits the concentration, collection, or assembly of poultry of all types, including wild waterfowl from one or more premises for purposes of sale. Shipments of eggs or baby chicks from National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) approved facilities are not affected by this order.

PREVIOUS

- On March 16, 2017, a second commercial poultry premises was confirmed with H7N9, HPAI, in Lincoln County, Tennessee. This premise is located less than two (2) miles away and in the same control zone as the March 5, 2017, H7N9, HPAI premise in Lincoln County, Tennessee. The infected poultry are depopulated and surveillance is on-going.
- As of March 14, 2017, three separate avian influenza investigations on three separate premises (one commercial and 2 backyard) are currently underway in Alabama. Confirmation of subtype is pending. Surveillance is on-going. The most recent investigation involved routine surveillance at a flea market.
- On March 8, 2017, Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI), H7N9, was confirmed in commercial poultry in Giles County, Tennessee. All poultry on the premise has been depopulated and surveillance is on-going.
- On March 4, 2017, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), H7N9, was confirmed in Lincoln County, Tennessee in commercial poultry. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture, with USDA support, responded to contain the virus; all birds were depopulated and properly disposed. A Control Zone that calls for strict movement control of poultry and poultry related products, poultry feed and supplies, has been established around the affected premise. Surveillance is on-going. The control zone extends into portions of Northern Alabama.

* It is important to note that both the HPAI H7N9 and the LPAI H7N9 confirmed in Tennessee and the LPAI confirmed in Alabama and Kentucky is of North American Wild Bird origin and is **NOT** related to the Asian H7N9 virus. While the subtype is the same as the China H7N9 lineage that emerged in 2013, this is a different virus and is genetically distinct from the China H7N9 lineage.

* Avian Influenza, HPAI and LPAI, do **NOT** present a food safety concern. All commercial poultry are tested prior to going to market. No affected commercial poultry will enter the food chain. While backyard poultry may not be tested prior to processing, proper handling and cooking of poultry will destroy the virus. The risk of human infection with avian influenza during poultry outbreaks is very low.

Background:

Visit www.ga-ai.org for previous announcements, press releases and information about Avian Influenza.