



THE INTERAGENCY BOARD

Training Trigger: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

April
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OPERATIONAL ISSUE

The potential exists for avian influenza to cause devastating economic impacts. Since December 2014, HPAI A H5 viruses (H5N2, H5N8, and novel H5N1) have been identified in birds in the United States (US). The majority of these infections occurred in poultry, both in commercial settings and backyard flocks. Nearly 50 million birds in 21 states have been depopulated (i.e., destroyed) to stop the disease from spreading. The viruses have also been found in wild birds in the Pacific, Central and Mississippi Migratory Flyways of North America. These viruses are highly pathogenic in birds, but there have been no known human infections and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention consider these viruses as low risk for humans. Because of their appearance in North American birds, there may be a higher likelihood of human infections occurring in the US. In other parts of the world there have been cases of severe and sometimes fatal human infections with other avian influenza viruses (H5N1, H5N6, H7N9). Continued surveillance for avian influenza viruses in wildlife within the US is ongoing through the collaborative efforts of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the US Department of Interior (DOI) and State departments of natural resources.

FAST FACTS

- Influenza viruses evolve continually and unpredictably. They often mutate and gain the ability to “host jump.” This means that a strain that normally only infects birds can become able to infect humans.
- Human infections in other countries have most often occurred after unprotected direct contact with infected birds or surfaces contaminated with the virus, or from being in close proximity to infected poultry. There have been no incidents of a human becoming infected by consuming properly cooked poultry or poultry products.
- Existing seasonal influenza vaccines do not protect humans against HPAI H5 viruses, but vaccines for these viruses are being developed.
- The USDA has recently conditionally licensed a vaccine for poultry.

ACTIVITIES

Given the unique challenges posed by HPAI, the InterAgency Board (IAB) Training & Exercises (T&E) SubGroup recommends that organizations:

1. Review the USDA/APHIS HPAI Preparedness and Response Plan.
2. Review and exercise response plans and decontamination procedures.
3. Review USDA personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations for first responders that have direct or proximal contact with sick, infected or deceased birds.
4. Conduct drills practicing the decontamination of PPE.
5. Maintain situational awareness of HPAI H5 viruses in the US by monitoring USDA and CDC websites.
6. Understand the biosecurity protocols for poultry producers.

New updates are posted in the “Documents” area of the IAB website, www.interagencyboard.org. Please contact the IAB at info@interagencyboard.us with any comments, feedback, or questions.

TEMPLATES/BEST PRACTICES

[USDA HPAI Response Plan](#)

[PPE Recommendations for Responders](#)

[HPAI Health & Safety Quick Response Card](#)

[HPAI SOP: Health and Safety and PPE](#)

[HPAI H5 Worker Protection PPE](#)

[Decontamination SOP](#)

[FAD Prep Resources and Materials](#)

[USDA Enhanced Biosecurity for Poultry Procedures](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

[USDA Avian Influenza Information](#)

[CDC Avian Influenza Information](#)

[Details of Past Outbreaks of Avian Influenza](#)

[Background Info on Avian Influenza Viruses](#)

