

March 17, 2022

Dear Farm Owner,

The Howard County Health Department (HCHD) is contacting you regarding the recent detection of avian influenza (“bird flu”) in domestic poultry, in several states, including Maryland (Eastern Shore), Delaware and Virginia.

Avian influenza is a virus that can cause disease in wild and domestic birds. The virus can cause severe illness and death in in some species of birds including domestic birds. While avian influenza can be transmitted to humans, the illness is typically mild. Infected birds can shed avian influenza viruses in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with the virus as it is shed, or through contact with surfaces that are contaminated with the virus. Signs of disease in birds include swollen eyelids/sinuses/combs or wattles, purple or bluish discoloration of wattles and combs, respiratory snicking, generally depressed birds, and unexplained mortality.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is working closely with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and local health departments to assist poultry producers in the surveillance, reporting and control of avian influenza. Poultry farmers are urged to remain vigilant and practice enhanced biosecurity on their farms. Along with our state partners, we are available to assist with preventing and controlling infection. Please report any unusual or sudden increases in sick birds to MDA (410-841-5810) and HCHD (410-313-1412). We will be reaching out by phone to proactively learn more about your farm, discuss infection prevention measures and review our role in responding to avian influenza in your birds. For additional information on avian influenza, please visit the websites listed below:

[HCHD Avian Influenza Information](#)

[USDA Prevention of Avian Influenza in Birds](#)

[MDA Avian Flu](#)

[Avian Influenza in Birds | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) \(cdc.gov\)](#)

[Maryland Sick Bird Reporting for Back Yard Flocks](#)

Sincerely,



Kelly Russo, MD, MPH
Medical Director