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April 11, 2022

From: Dr. Keith Lehman
Chief Provincial Veterinarian

To: Alberta Backyard/Small-Flock Poultry Keepers

Re: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) – Update #2

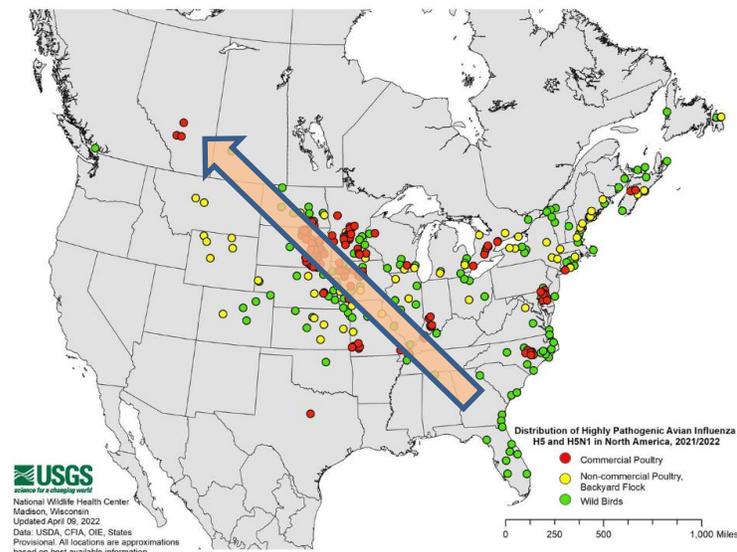
The Avian Influenza Risk Level in Alberta has recently been changed to RED.

What has changed?

- **The federally reportable disease, HPAI, has now been confirmed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in at least 3 poultry flocks in Alberta**
- We are now in a period of high migratory wild bird activity
- There is increased foraging behavior of wild birds in close proximity to farms and dwellings where poultry are kept
- There have already been positive HPAI detections in wild birds, commercial and backyard poultry in several Canadian provinces (BC, ON, NS, NL, and PEI)
- HPAI has affected a large number of birds in the USA this spring

April 9, 2022 - AI situation in North America, courtesy of United States Geological Survey – National Wildlife Health Center. <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/distribution-highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza-north-america-20212022>

Distribution of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5 and H5N1 in North America, 2021/2022



Sources/Usage: Public Domain.

Distribution of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5 and H5N1 in North America, 2021/2022. Updated April 09, 2022.

What does this mean for backyard/small flock poultry keepers?

It is now critical to protect your flock and neighboring small flocks.

- Be aware of your flock's environment and health.
- Be pro-active by increasing your biosecurity (see below)
- Report signs of illness and/or sudden deaths in your flock to at least one of the following: your flock veterinarian (if you have one), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and/or Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development

Increasing your biosecurity during the spring migration is your best defense.

- **Restrict visitors to your flock, and avoid visiting other premises that keep poultry.**
- Do not bring new poultry into an established flock (especially adult birds). If you must do this, quarantine the birds in a separate building/coop at least 30 feet away for at least 30 days before introducing them to your flock. Do not add birds to your flock that show ANY signs of illness at ANY time during this isolation period (even if they seem to have recovered).
- **Poultry shows and live animal sales are high risk activities for the spread of many poultry diseases including HPAI.** This can occur through the movement of birds, but also through the tracking of viruses and bacteria that can get on your clothing, footwear, and vehicles. **Cancelling/avoiding these events is highly recommended at this time.**
- Have dedicated farm boots/footwear (and ideally, dedicated clothing such as coveralls) for accessing your coop. Do not wear these outside your coop/run, especially to areas where wild birds may congregate such as open fields or the shores of water bodies. Keep them separate from your other footwear/clothing.
- Minimize the number of people that have access to your flock
- Prevent free-ranging during the migration season. Move birds to indoor housing if possible. If indoor housing is not available, ensure your poultry, equipment, feed, and water sources are not accessible to wildlife. In many cases, this is as easy as securing some netting or wire mesh over the top of your run.
- Swine can also be infected with avian and human influenza strains, which can increase the risk to both poultry and public health. If you keep pigs as well as poultry, maintain effective biosecurity between these species by managing them separately.
- Wash hands before and after attending to any poultry

What happens if you suspect your flock may have Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza?

Contact your flock veterinarian and at least one of the following:

- **The Canadian Food Inspection Agency: Dr. Ravinder Arora, 403-629-1728, Ravinder.Arora@inspection.gc.ca**
- **The Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian: 1-780-427-3448 or 1-800-524-0051**

You will be directed to a testing program (at no cost to you). Self-quarantine your flock until you have been notified of your results. If positive for HPAI, CFIA will quarantine your flock and initiate a disease investigation.

For further information on avian influenza in Canada and the latest updates, you can visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at www.inspection.gc.ca/avian-influenza and/or the Government of Alberta website at <https://www.alberta.ca/avian-influenza-reportable.aspx>

If you have questions regarding this notice, please feel free to contact the Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian by email at chief.prov.vet@gov.ab.ca or by telephone at 780-427-3448.