



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 15, 2017

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**STATE VETERINARIAN ISSUES POULTRY HEALTH ADVISORY**

*-“Keep them home to keep them healthy”-*

NASHVILLE—The state veterinarian for Tennessee is urging all poultry owners to take extra precautions to protect their flocks from illness.

“We are working to protect the poultry population from exposure to avian influenza,” State Veterinarian Dr. Charles Hatcher said. “The best way to protect your birds is to increase your biosecurity measures and particularly, to keep your birds at home for now.”

Dr. Hatcher advises owners of backyard and commercial flocks to avoid transporting or comingling birds. That would include, but is not limited to, avoidance of poultry exhibitions, shows or sales at fairs, festivals, flea markets or auctions.

“We know that wild birds can carry avian influenza and that it is likely naturally circulating in the environment right now,” Dr. Hatcher continued. “We expect this threat to diminish over time as migratory patterns change with consistently warmer weather.”

This advisory is in response to the confirmed detection of H7N9 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) at a commercial poultry premises in Lincoln County, Tenn. on March 4. On March 8, officials confirmed the detection of H7N9 low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) at a commercial poultry premises in Giles County, Tenn. This virus is **not** the same as the China H7N9 virus affecting Asia and is genetically distinct.

State and federal officials continue to monitor and test poultry located in the areas immediately surrounding the two affected premises.

**Neither LPAI nor HPAI pose a risk to the food supply.** No affected animals entered the food chain. Furthermore, the Tennessee Department of Health confirms that the risk of a human becoming ill with avian influenza during poultry illness incidents is very low.

*-More-*

*Poultry Health Advisory*

*2-2-2-2*

Owners of commercial and backyard poultry flocks are encouraged to closely observe their birds.

- Report a sudden increase in sick birds or bird deaths to the state veterinarian's office at 615- 837-5120 and/or USDA at 1-866-536-7593
- Prevent contact with wild birds
- Practice good biosecurity with your poultry <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>
- Enroll in the National Poultry Improvement Plan [www.poultryimprovement.org](http://www.poultryimprovement.org)
- Follow Tennessee's avian influenza updates and access resources for producers and consumers <http://www.tn.gov/agriculture/article/ag-businesses-avianinfluenza>

The state veterinarian and staff are focused on animal health and disease prevention. Each year, the Kord Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory tests approximately 22,000 samples from poultry for avian influenza. Since March 3, the lab has tested more than 1,500 samples.

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