

### Avian Influenza's Reappearance Calls for Renewed Diligence

After enjoying a brief summer hiatus (since July 2), as of August 15<sup>th</sup> avian influenza has reappeared in a live bird sales market in Los Angeles, California. Although on the west coast, this serves as an important reminder that avian influenza has not gone away. As a refresher, avian influenza (AI) is a highly contagious viral disease of birds caused by infection with avian influenza type A viruses. These viruses occur naturally in wild aquatic birds worldwide and can easily be passed to domestic poultry through contact with wild bird feces and/or respiratory secretions--with devastating effects. There is no treatment or cure once poultry have been infected, so the only treatment is prevention.



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County Fair season (with the accompanying livestock and poultry shows) is in full swing, and the appearance of the virus in a live bird sales market is a reminder to practice biosecurity whether carrying birds to and from those events or simply enjoying the events as a spectator. Just a little care will prevent the carrying of an unwelcome souvenir home to the birds in your coop. If you're enjoying the poultry event as a spectator, be sure to change clothes and shoes and wash hands prior to entering your chicken coop or interacting with your birds. As a matter of fact, it's a good practice to make a habit of having clothes/shoes dedicated for use only in your coop. Birds that leave the farm and then return home later should be isolated and quarantined for 30 days minimum before rejoining the flock. Any new birds should also be isolated and quarantined prior to flock introduction. Equipment that leaves the farm should also be cleaned and disinfected upon return to the farm--at the farm gate if possible.

If working the birds, be sure to work, feed, or otherwise interact with isolated birds last. They should be the last birds interacted with before clothing is removed and washed. Do not go from the isolated bird coop to the flock's coop unless hands are cleaned and all clothing has been changed, including footwear. Any equipment used with the isolated birds should be cleaned and disinfected before being used with the flock.

All of these things are elements of a good biosecurity program, but what else is included in a comprehensive plan?

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Poultry pens are bird-proofed against wild or free-flying birds.

Safeguards are in place to prevent the accidental entrance of wildlife and to remove them from poultry pens should they gain entrance.

Dogs and cats are not allowed in poultry areas.

Feed bins are secured to prevent contamination by wild birds or rodents—and spilled feed is cleaned up promptly to prevent attracting those creatures.

Water is drawn from secure sources that cannot be accessed by free-flying birds or rodents.

Dedicated footwear is only worn in pen or coop to prevent tracking infected material in from the outside. Consider double-booting with disposable footwear, otherwise.

Equipment is cleaned and sanitized before being brought to the farm and between separate groups on the farm and held securely in areas to prevent exposure to wild birds.

Report sick birds or unexplained mortality immediately with the State Vet's office, especially if any birds have been recently off the farm. The State Vet's office number is 615-837-5120. For more information, please call your local Rutherford County UT/TSU Extension office at 615-898-7710 or visit our website at [rutherford.tennessee.edu](http://rutherford.tennessee.edu).