

MDARD Director Stops Bird Exhibitions to Protect Health of Michigan Domestic Flocks

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Effective today, 2022 poultry exhibitions are stopped until Michigan has 30 days with no new HPAI cases

LANSING, MI – After much deliberation and consultation with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s (MDARD) State Veterinarian Dr. Nora Wineland, MDARD’s Director, Gary McDowell, has decided to stop 2022 poultry and waterfowl exhibitions in Michigan until such time that the state goes 30 days without a new detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in domestic poultry. This decision is effective immediately to further protect against the spread of HPAI, helping to keep Michigan’s domestic poultry flocks safe.

This stop does include (but is not limited to) shows, exhibitions, swap meets, petting zoos at fairs, and game bird/waterfowl fair displays. This stop does NOT include or affect egg hatching exhibits, pigeon races, or zoos.

HPAI is a highly contagious virus that can be spread in various ways from flock to flock, including by wild birds, through contact with infected poultry, by equipment, and on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. As new cases of HPAI continue to be identified across the nation and in Michigan, bringing in poultry from different flocks to a central location creates a significant risk.

So far this year, Michigan has responded to 12 cases of HPAI in non-commercial backyard flocks from nine different counties across both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas.

“MDARD is committed to protecting the health of all Michigan’s domestic birds. Preventative measures are the best and only tools we have to limit the negative impact of HPAI. By exercising this necessary precaution, we can wait for the warmer, drier weather needed to kill the virus without creating conditions that could worsen the problem,” said Dr. Wineland. “By taking this step now, it is hoped that poultry exhibitors can still participate in fair activities once circumstances have improved.”

MDARD will continue to monitor the situation and work in conjunction with the Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions, Michigan State University Extension, 4-H programs, and other partners to notify and advise exhibitors regarding when these activities can resume and how to conduct them safely.

More information on this stop can be found in the [frequently asked questions](#) available at Michigan.gov/BirdFlu.

“While the stop on poultry exhibitions is not ideal, the safety of our exhibitors, attendees, and animals is of the utmost importance to our fairs,” said Lisa Reiff, Executive Director Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions. “When poultry exhibitions were canceled in 2015, many fairs thought outside the box to allow exhibitors an opportunity to highlight their projects in unique ways without live exhibitions. Fairs are already planning ways for poultry to still be a part of the fair in a non-traditional way that will keep everyone safe.”

“Our 4-H families are often on the leading edge of biosecurity,” said Jake DeDecker, Michigan State University Extension state 4-H leader. “We will work closely with MDARD and MAFE to make sure that we address this issue head on.”

Also, the preventative measures needed to protect flocks should not stop at the fairgrounds. Whether it’s a few backyard birds or a large commercial flock, following [a few key steps](#) is fundamental to protect the health and vitality of Michigan’s domestic birds:

- Prevent contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing them indoors or ensuring their outdoor area is fully enclosed.
- Wash your hands before and after handling birds as well as when moving between different coops.
- Disinfecting boots and other gear when moving between coops.
- Do not share equipment or other supplies between coops or other farms.
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and other supplies between uses. If it cannot be disinfected, discard it.
- Using well or municipal water as drinking water for birds.
- Keep poultry feed secure to ensure there is no contact between the feed/feed ingredients and wild birds or rodents.

According to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the public health risk associated with these avian influenza detections remains low. No birds or bird products infected with HPAI will enter the commercial food chain. As a reminder, people are encouraged [to properly handle](#) and cook all poultry and eggs.

Reporting Possible Cases

For Domestic Birds

Domestic bird owners and caretakers should watch for unusual deaths, a drop in egg production, a significant decrease in water consumption, or an increase in sick birds. If avian influenza is suspected in domestic birds,

contact MDARD immediately at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours).

For Wild Birds

If anyone notices what appears to be unusual or unexplained deaths among wild bird populations, please report these cases to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by:

- Using the DNR's Eyes in the Field app. Choose the "Diseased Wildlife" option among the selections for "Observation Forms."
- Calling the DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory at 517-336-5030.

Stay Up to Date

Subscribe to receive email notifications by visiting [MDARD's website](#) and clicking on the "Avian Influenza" link. After entering a valid email address, subscribers will receive updates and alerts regarding the status of avian influenza in Michigan whenever there are new developments to report. Additional resources can also be found at Michigan.gov/BirdFlu. More information on avian influenza and how to protect flocks through biosecurity measures can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [website](#).