



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gary W. Black, Commissioner

www.agr.georgia.gov

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of Communications

404-656-3689

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Confirmed in a Backyard Flock in Georgia

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) have confirmed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a non-commercial, backyard flock (non-poultry) located in Toombs County, Georgia. This is the first confirmation of HPAI in Georgia. Avian influenza does not pose a risk to the food supply, and no affected animals entered the food chain. The risk of human infection with avian influenza is very low.

The flock owners reported sick birds and an increased rate of mortality. Samples taken on May 29 were tested for the presence of H5N1 avian influenza virus in the flock by the Georgia Poultry Laboratory Network (GPLN) and USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL). This is the first detection of the virus in domestic birds in Georgia in 2022. There are no detections in commercial poultry in the state.

"Poultry is the top sector of our number one industry, agriculture, and we are committed to protecting the livelihoods of the many farm families that are dependent on it," said Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary W. Black. "In order to successfully do that, it is imperative that we continue our efforts of extensive biosecurity."

The official order suspending poultry exhibitions and assembly of poultry, issued by the state veterinarian's office on February 16, remains in effect. This order prohibits all exhibitions, shows, sales (flea markets, auction markets), swaps and meets pertaining to poultry and feathered fowl in the State of Georgia until further notice.

Poultry flock owners are encouraged to closely observe their birds and report a sudden increase in the number of sick birds or bird deaths to the Avian Influenza Hotline at 770-766-6850. For more updates and information regarding biosecurity tips visit:

[Protect Your Flock \(Georgia Dept. of Ag\)](#)

[Defend the Flock - Resource Center \(USDA APHIS\)](#)

[AI Information for Hunters \(USDA\)](#)

[Avian Influenza FAQ](#)

[Protect Your Livelihood PDF](#)

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Help prevent **avian influenza** in Georgia

Currently, avian influenza (AI) is not a threat to human health or food safety in Georgia. AI poses a risk to all poultry operations, from backyard flocks to the state's \$22.8 billion commercial industry. The key to preventing the spread of the disease is biosecurity. All bird owners should take measures to prevent the exposure of flocks to AI.

Watch for the following symptoms in your flock:

Swelling around the head and neck

Purple discoloration of wattles and combs

Coughing

Nasal discharge

Lethargy

Sudden death without clinical signs

Purple discoloration of the legs

Watery or green diarrhea



**report
a case
online**

(770) 766-6850

Contact the avian influenza hotline at the Georgia Department of Agriculture with questions and concerns or to report a suspected case.



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**
College of Agricultural &
Environmental Sciences

**Additional Avian
Influenza resources:**



University
of Georgia



Georgia Department
of Agriculture

PROTECT YOUR FLOCK from avian influenza

agr.georgia.gov



In 2022 AI viruses were detected in the US. Contact with the feces of wild birds can introduce the virus into small flocks via direct contact with ducks and geese outdoors or on shoes and equipment brought indoors.

What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza is a viral disease of poultry. It can be of low pathogenicity (LPAI), causing mild disease, or of high pathogenicity (HPAI), causing severe disease and death. There are different strains of the virus, for example H1N1 or H7N3. Some AI LPAI viruses can mutate and become HPAI viruses. Waterfowl contribute to the spread of avian influenza.

How do I recognize the disease in my birds?

LPAI can resemble any other mild respiratory disease (noise, swollen faces, conjunctivitis). In breeders, egg production drops and eggshells may be soft. With HPAI, birds may become quiet, not eat and drink, have diarrhea, and have discolored combs and feet. Birds may also die suddenly with no signs of disease.



How do I prevent avian influenza in my small flock?

Use dedicated footwear and wash your hands when tending your flock.

Do not let poultry drink untreated water from lakes and ponds.

Do not let waterfowl become residents close to small domestic flocks.

Do not come into direct contact with your flocks if you have seen birds in another country or been involved with hunting, or in contact with any other birds (zoos, auctions, flea markets, live bird markets).

Questions about avian influenza in Georgia?
Call the Ga. Dept. of Ag at 404-656-3600.

What do I do if I suspect my birds have AI?

**Testing for AI is free
through the Georgia
Poultry Lab Network.
Call the AI Hot line
770-766-6850.**