

# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

## What To Expect at the Start of an Outbreak

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a deadly poultry disease that can affect your flock. It spreads quickly and can devastate entire industries. In short, an HPAI outbreak is an animal health emergency.

When HPAI is detected on your property or close to it, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and your State government will work with you and others in the local area to immediately contain the outbreak and protect animal health. Here's what you can expect in the first days and weeks of an outbreak in your area.

### Testing and Diagnosis

If your birds appear sick, USDA or State officials will collect samples from your flock to check for HPAI. We may also test your flock without you reporting sick birds if HPAI has been detected elsewhere in your local area.

We will send the samples to a nearby laboratory in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network for preliminary testing. This network includes State, university, and Federal laboratories throughout the United States that have the capacity to handle a large volume of testing and give results quickly—in most cases, the same day a lab receives samples.

We will also send samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) for confirmation. NVSL is the official reference laboratory for foreign animal disease testing, including HPAI, in the United States. NVSL usually takes 1–2 days to complete this work, but it can take longer, and we may need to collect additional samples to complete the testing.

### Quarantine

If you have HPAI in your flock, we will help you put in place measures to stop the disease from spreading. This includes placing your operation under quarantine. In a quarantine, only authorized workers can come in and out of infected properties, and the movement of poultry, poultry products, and equipment from quarantined properties is restricted. In a quarantine, your main responsibilities are to:

- ▲ Know and comply with all quarantine restrictions.
- ▲ Continue to follow strict biosecurity procedures on your premises.



- ▲ Allow Federal and State personnel access to your property to collect test samples and carry out emergency response work.
- ▲ Work with USDA and State officials to complete required paperwork, including an inventory of your flock.
- ▲ Respond as quickly and completely as you can to information requests during the epidemiological investigation.

Following quarantine requirements, using proper biosecurity, and cooperating with Federal and State officials are the most important things you can do to keep HPAI from spreading. The faster we can contain the disease, the faster you can get back to business.

### Tracking Disease Spread

During an HPAI outbreak, USDA and State officials will also work to find out where the infection came from and where it may have spread. To do this, we investigate and trace the movement of animals, people, and equipment in and out of your premises, leading up to when HPAI was found in your flock and immediately afterward. This is called an epidemiological investigation.

The information we gain from the investigation helps us respond to the outbreak more effectively and stop the disease in its tracks. It also tells us how you can best protect your flock from HPAI in the future, based on the specifics of your facility and how the disease got there. Working together, we can better protect your flock and the poultry industry as a whole.

### Questions?

Talk with your case manager or call the nearest USDA Veterinary Services office ([www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health); click on "Contact Us").



Learn more about how to protect your flock from HPAI and other diseases:  
[aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock](http://aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock) • [cdc.gov/flu/avianflu](http://cdc.gov/flu/avianflu)