



DEC 15 Dangerous poultry virus detection confirmed in Kentucky backyard flock

FRANKFORT (Dec. 15, 2025) - Federal and state authorities report a confirmed case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a Jessamine County backyard poultry flock.

Kentucky State Veterinarian Dr. Steve Velasco III said the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories confirmed the presence of HPAI in samples taken from the Jessamine County premises.

"The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Office of State Veterinarian (OSV) is working closely with federal animal health officials and other state agencies to contain this incident of avian influenza," Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell said. "Protecting the health of livestock and poultry in the Commonwealth is a priority of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture."

HPAI is known to be deadly for domesticated chickens and turkeys. On Dec. 6, representatives at the Jessamine County premises alerted KDA of increased mortality in their flock. Testing at the University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed the presence of HPAI.

After HPAI confirmation, the KDA/OSV Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response was deployed to the premises. The affected flock is quarantined, and depopulation began on Dec. 11.

A 10-kilometer surveillance zone around the infected premises was established. Movement restrictions have been placed on all backyard and commercial facilities in the surveillance zone to avert further spread of the disease. Those premises will be monitored through active surveillance. Any premises with birds demonstrating clinical signs of HPAI will be tested.

"We are working diligently to prevent this virus from spreading to other poultry premises," Dr. Velasco said. "We have activated our avian influenza response plan and are in active communication with our state, federal, and industry partners."

Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk; poultry and eggs are safe to eat when handled and cooked properly. There is no risk to the food supply, but birds from the flocks will not enter the food system.

Anyone involved with poultry production from a small backyard to a large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to ensure the health of their birds. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has materials about biosecurity, including videos, checklists, and a toolkit available as part of its **Defend The Flock program (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock/resources>)**.

In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds. Kentucky bird owners should report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to state and federal officials, through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks can be found at **<http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>** (**<http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>**).

Kentucky's poultry industry ranks eighth in the nation for broiler production and 15th in poultry/eggs sales. Kentucky's poultry industry generates more than \$1.7 billion annually.