

## USDA Releases Combined Poultry 2004 Report

The National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, has released a descriptive report entitled *Part IV: Reference of Health and Management of Backyard/Small Production Flocks and Gamefowl Breeder Flocks in the United States, 2004*. The report combines and compares information collected from backyard flock producers and gamefowl breeders reported in Parts I and II of the NAHMS Poultry 2004 study.

Poultry 2004 is NAHMS' second study of the U.S. poultry industry. Layers 1999 was the first national study on poultry baseline health and management. Layers 1999 estimated the prevalence and associated risk factors of *Salmonella enterica* subsp. *enteritidis* in U.S. layer flocks.

For Poultry 2004, NAHMS conducted a thorough assessment to determine the information needs of the poultry industry, researchers and federal and state governments. This assessment indicated a need for information regarding bird health, bird movement and biosecurity practices of nontraditional poultry industries, such as backyard flocks, gamefowl and live-poultry markets. Here are a few findings from this combined, Part IV of the Poultry 2004 study:

- Gamefowl breeder flocks were larger than backyard flocks. More than half of gamefowl breeder flocks had 100 or more birds, while more than half of backyard flocks had fewer than 20 birds.
- Owners of backyard flocks report very few health problems. The most common health problems reported by Owners of gamefowl breeder flocks were external parasites and respiratory problems.
- Owners of backyard flocks ranked feedstores and extension service as the most important sources of health information, while owners of gamefowl breeder flocks ranked magazines and journals highest, followed by feedstores.
- Footwear-related biosecurity precautions for people entering bird areas were required by 11.4 percent of backyard flock owners and by 52.2 percent of gamefowl breeder flock owners.
- About half of backyard flock and gamefowl breeder flock owners never allowed visitors.

- Introductions of new birds into the flock occurred more frequently in gamefowl breeder flocks than in backyard flocks.
- Obtaining new birds from outside the United States was extremely rare for both backyard flocks and gamefowl breeder flocks.
- Owners of fewer than one in five backyard flocks sold or gave away birds, while nearly three in four owners of gamefowl breeder flocks did so.
- Interstate and international bird sales were more common for gamefowl breeder flocks than in backyard flocks.
- Owners of less than 4 percent of backyard flocks moved birds to locations (e.g. fairs, show, etc.) where other birds were present, whereas 69.9 percent of owners of gamefowl breeder flocks did so.
- Owners of both backyard flocks and gamefowl breeder flocks ranked fun/hobby highest as the reason for having birds.

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