

USDA Guidance For Nonconfinement Poultry Production Operations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today released a document entitled, *Further Guidance on Biosecurity and Disease Prevention and Control for Nonconfinement Poultry Production for Poultry Production Operations*. The guidance document comes as a result of a concerted effort by federal and state animal health regulatory agencies and industry to implement increased biosecurity measures to prevent and control possible avian influenza (AI) outbreaks that may occur in commercial poultry, live bird markets and poultry raised in nonconfinement operations, such as free-range and organic poultry.

It is recognized that wild birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds, can be carriers for AI, and that the H5/H7 subtypes have the potential to mutate into high-pathogenicity AI if the virus becomes established in domestic poultry. The guidance document outlines specific recommendations that poultry producers who raise birds in outdoor, nonconfinement systems should follow to prevent their poultry from coming in contact with wild birds. Some of the recommendations include:

- Keeping birds indoors,
- Keeping outdoor enclosures covered with wire mesh or netting in lower risk areas, and
- Preventative measures intended to protect animal health and providing food and feed in an indoor area.

The recommendations are intended to protect animal health and minimize AI-related sanctions that may be imposed by our trading partners in the event of an outbreak.

USDA currently has an interlocking system of safeguards in place to protect the U.S. poultry industry from rapid spread of AI including trade restrictions, ongoing federal-state-industry surveillance and emergency preparedness and outreach programs to ensure early detection and rapid response to any signs of the virus.

Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. For additional information on this topic, contact Karen Eggert at (301) 734-7280 or visit our Avian Influenza Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/avian_influenza/avian_influenza.shtml.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.