

Proposed NPIP H5/H7 Low Path Avian Influenza Control Program for Commercial Table-Egg Layers, Broilers, and Turkeys

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Presently, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) does not require member nations to report low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI). However, the OIE has recently proposed changes for controlling LPAI. Under these changes, H5/H7 LPAI would become a notifiable avian influenza. Countries, or regions within countries, could be required to demonstrate freedom from H5/H7 LPAI disease before exporting poultry. In addition, an active surveillance program for LPAI in commercial poultry would be needed to ensure that any restrictions to trade are scientifically justified.

In response to OIE's proposed changes, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) requested that representatives from the United States Animal Health Association's (USAHA) Transmissible Diseases of Poultry Committee (TDPC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), work together to develop regulatory options for H5/H7 LPAI surveillance. Delegates to the 36th biennial conference of the NPIP called for the establishment of a LPAI Working Group. More than 50 industry leaders from the National Chicken Council, the National Turkey Federation, and the United Egg Producers discussed options during the summer and into the fall. The LPAI Working Group developed active surveillance programs for commercial layers, broilers, and turkeys. These proposed active surveillance programs were presented to and accepted by the USAHA's TDPC in St. Louis, Missouri.

The TDPC asked the NPIP to develop criteria for certifying complexes, slaughter plants, and States as "U.S. H5/H7 Avian Influenza Monitored." The TDPC also asked the NPIP to develop guidelines for a diagnostic surveillance plan, as well as State response and containment plans for the H5/H7 LPAI program for commercial table-egg layers, broilers, and turkeys.

The proposed "U.S. H5/H7 LPAI Monitored Program for Commercial Table-egg Layers, Meat-type Chickens, and Meat-type Turkeys" would be administered like the NPIP breeder programs. The program

- Calls for active surveillance for H5/H7 LPAI at table-egg layer houses, the broiler and turkey flock level, or slaughter plants;
- Makes H5/H7 LPAI a reportable disease and requires all authorized laboratories that perform diagnostic procedures on poultry to examine all submitted cases of unexplained respiratory disease, egg production drops, and mortality for AI;
- Requires each participating State to have an initial State response and containment (ISR&C) plan for H5/H7 LPAI;

- Defines H5/H7 LPAI infection as the following: H5/H7 LPAI virus has been isolated and identified as such or viral RNA specific for H5/H7 LPAI has been detected in poultry and antibodies to H5/H7 subtype of AI virus that are not a consequence of vaccination have been detected in poultry; and
- Authorizes APHIS to pay for 100 percent of the cost of purchase, destruction, and disposal of poultry infected with or exposed to H5/H7 LPAI; cleaning and disinfection of contaminated barns and equipment; and 100 percent of the cost of any surveillance, vaccination, monitoring, and euthanasia associated with an eradication effort for H5/H7 LPAI—provided that the producers affected by the outbreak are participants in the control program *and* the State in which the outbreak occurs has a diagnostic surveillance program and has developed an ISR&C for H5/H7 LPAI that has been approved by APHIS. For all nonparticipating flocks of table-egg layers, broilers, and turkeys, APHIS will indemnify only 25 percent of the above costs.

For more information on the proposed NPIP H5/H7 Low Path Avian Influenza Control Program for Commercial Table-Egg Layers, Broilers, and Turkeys, contact Dr. Andy Rhorer at Andrew.R.Rhorer@aphis.usda.gov or 770-922-3496.