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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Presumptive Positive in Pottawatomie County

MANHATTAN, Kansas — The Kansas Department of Agriculture is awaiting confirmation on a presumptive positive case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a backyard flock in Pottawatomie County. If confirmed, it would be the first case of HPAI in Kansas this fall. “If you have not yet taken steps to protect your backyard flocks, now is the time to take this threat seriously,” said Dr. Justin Smith, Kansas Animal Health Commissioner.

Fall has brought a resurgence of HPAI nationwide, including cases in several states that border Kansas — Missouri, Oklahoma and Colorado. KDA advises owners of poultry flocks to be particularly vigilant in protecting their birds. Analysis of this outbreak of HPAI has shown that the spread has been primarily from wild migratory waterfowl, which makes free-range backyard flocks at high risk because of the potential of exposure to the wild birds.

Anyone involved with poultry production from the small backyard chicken owner to the large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds. Find guidance on biosecurity on the KDA Division of Animal Health webpage at agriculture.ks.gov/AvianInfluenza.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza is a highly contagious viral disease that can infect chickens, gamebirds, turkeys, and other birds and can cause severe illness and/or sudden death in infected birds. This outbreak has seen illness and mortality in a wider scope of bird species than past outbreaks, including wild and domestic waterfowl. Attentively monitor your birds for symptoms of HPAI which include: coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, and other signs of respiratory distress; lack of energy and appetite; decreased water consumption; decreased egg production and/or soft-shelled, misshapen eggs;

incoordination; and diarrhea. Avian influenza can also cause sudden death in birds even if they aren't showing other symptoms.

If these symptoms are observed in your birds, immediately contact your veterinarian. If you don't have a regular veterinarian, contact KDA's Division of Animal Health office toll-free at 833-765-2006.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections do not present an immediate public health concern. Birds and eggs from the infected flock will not enter the food system. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of all poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F is recommended as a general food safety precaution.

For more information about HPAI, including current status of the confirmed cases in other states as well as more information about biosecurity for your flock, go to KDA's avian influenza webpage at agriculture.ks.gov/AvianInfluenza or call KDA at 833-765-2006.

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