

# Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Reminds poultry owners of increasing threat of avian influenza

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MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding poultry owners of the ongoing threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The spring migratory period for wild birds brings an increased risk of infection to all flocks, so DATCP recommends that poultry owners continue using the strongest biosecurity measures to protect their birds.

In Wisconsin last year, 29 domestic flocks in 18 counties were confirmed with HPAI. Nationwide, more than 58.5 million birds have died related to HPAI making it the largest animal disease outbreak in U.S. history, surpassing the 2014-15 bird flu outbreak.

The best way to protect flocks from infection is through strong biosecurity practices that do not allow for virus introduction. All poultry owners, regardless of the size of the operation, must ensure that strict biosecurity practices are in place to prevent HPAI from infecting flocks. As the spring migration of wild birds begins, DATCP encourages all poultry producers to review and update their biosecurity plans. Those who do not have a biosecurity plan should work with their flock veterinarian to develop one that clearly addresses the risks for disease introduction specific to their operations. Biosecurity guides and other resources are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Defend the Flock Program](#).

State law requires Wisconsin poultry and other livestock owners to register where their animals are kept. DATCP uses this information to rapidly respond to animal

disease outbreaks to protect animal health, the food supply, public safety, and Wisconsin's agriculture economy. Registration is free and can be completed at [wiid.org](http://wiid.org) or by calling the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium at (888) 808-1910.

Poultry owners who recognize any abnormal increase in mortality or clinical signs of disease, including respiratory distress, drop in food or water intake, decreased egg production, and lethargy are asked to report it to DATCP at (800) 572-8981.

Please visit [hpa.wi.gov](http://hpa.wi.gov) for regular updates on HPAI in Wisconsin and resources for poultry owners. More information on HPAI, prevention strategies and biosecurity is available here:

- [U.S. Poultry and Egg Association self-assessment of enhanced biosecurity](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Avian influenza and wild birds](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Avian influenza and humans](#)