

Second avian influenza detection found in Jefferson County

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MADISON — The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture is responding to a second detection of H5 avian influenza in an 800,000 bird egg-laying chicken flock in Jefferson county. There are now five cases in Wisconsin.

While lethal to domestic poultry, the strain of virus detected is not known to have caused disease in humans and is not expected to pose a risk to public health or the food supply.

The Jefferson County property was immediately quarantined and neighboring properties with poultry will be notified about the situation. Remaining birds will be depopulated and will not enter the food supply. Following USDA protocols, surveillance and testing procedures will take place at properties near the affected facility to ensure the virus has not spread.

The H5 avian influenza virus first was detected in Wisconsin at a commercial chicken flock in Jefferson County on Monday, April 13, which led to the depopulation of more than 180,000 egg-laying chickens. Since then three additional flocks were detected in Barron, Juneau and Chippewa counties, bringing the total number of birds killed to nearly 400,000 in Wisconsin.

Multiple outbreaks of avian influenza have occurred most recently in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Arkansas, the Dakotas and Kansas leading to the depopulation of more than 1 million turkeys and chickens since January.

Dr. Paul McGraw, Wisconsin state veterinarian, already has issued a ban on poultry movement to shows, exhibitions and swap meets in Jefferson, Juneau and Barron counties. Chippewa county was added to the ban this morning.

Wisconsinites are reminded that the avian influenza virus strain currently detected in Wisconsin and the other states presents low risk to public health. Poultry meat and egg products in the marketplace remain safe to eat. As always, both wild and domestic poultry should be properly cooked.

Officials are investigating how the virus entered the flock and may not have answers for some time. Until then, backyard poultry owners and other poultry producers are encouraged to practice good biosecurity and to take steps that prevent contact between their birds and wild birds. They also should monitor their flock closely and report sick or dead birds to DATCP at 1-800-572-8981.

For more information on avian influenza and biosecurity measures, go to http://datcp.wi.gov/Animals/Animal_Diseases/Avian_Influenza/index.aspx.