

Third Jefferson County farm infected with avian influenza

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MADISON — Two more cases of the deadly bird flu virus have been detected in Wisconsin, including a third in Jefferson County.

The state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection announced Monday that H5 avian influenza has been discovered on two more farms in Barron and Jefferson counties. Wisconsin now has 10 total cases, including five in Barron County, three in Jefferson and one each in Juneau and Chippewa counties.

The new Jefferson County case involves 127,970 commercially raised chickens, while the Barron County commercial facility cited has 14,600 breeding turkeys.

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.

As with past detections, each property immediately was quarantined and neighboring properties with poultry were being 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 was first detected in Wisconsin at a commercial chicken flock in Jefferson County on April 13. Officials report that, as of Monday, the “depopulation” and surveillance sample were complete at that farm, which had 200,000 chickens. Compost monitoring, a second round of surveillance sampling, cleaning and disinfection were under way.

At the second county site, reportedly housing 800,000 egg-laying hens owned by the Lake Mills-based Daybreak Foods, the depopulation was continuing and the first round of surveillance sampling was complete.

At the new, and third, site, the initial site assessment was complete and the farm was awaiting depopulation.

Originally, 14 Wisconsin Army National Guard personnel were assisting with the response to the first detection in Jefferson County, helping clean and disinfect large vehicles and equipment leaving the site. Officials said they have specialized training in this function and are not involved directly in the depopulation efforts on the farm.

On Monday, it was reported at the Wisconsin National Guard personnel had been scaled down to only three to four personnel assisting with the mission.

The 10 Wisconsin flocks affected by the virus total 1,597,240 birds. 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 15.7 million turkeys and chickens.

A ban on poultry movement to shows, exhibitions and swap meets in Barron, Chippewa, Jefferson, and Juneau counties remains in effect.

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.