

Avian Influenza (AI) – What Poultry Growers Need to Know

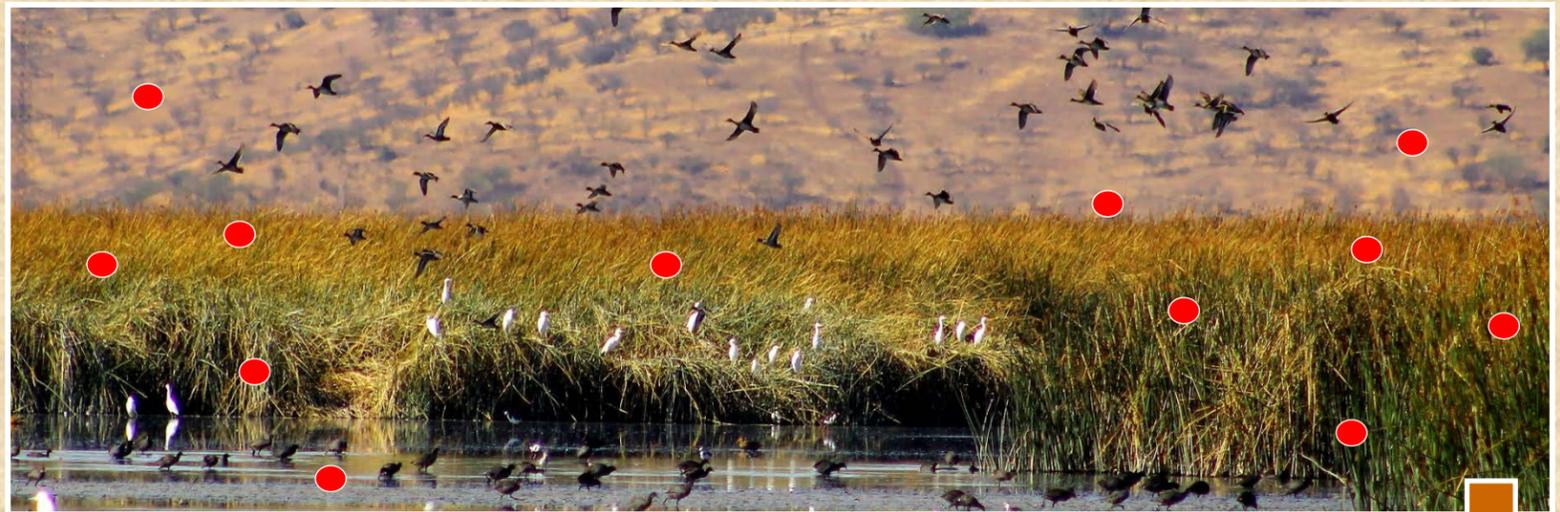
The virus is carried by healthy waterfowlbut can make domestic poultry very sick!

Definitions: AI is a virus disease of poultry. AI can be of low pathogenicity (LPAI), causing mild disease, or of high pathogenicity (HPAI), causing severe disease and mortality. There are different strains of AI viruses: examples are H1N1 or H5N2. Some AI viruses can mutate and become HPAI viruses.

What are the clinical signs (symptoms) of AI? LPAI in chickens and turkeys resembles any other mild respiratory disease (noise, swollen faces, conjunctivitis – photos 1, 2). In breeders, it can also cause a production drop, and birds may produce soft shelled eggs (photo 7). With HPAI, the birds may become very quiet, not eat or drink, have diarrhea, and discolored combs and feet (photos 3, 4, 5, 6). Birds may also die suddenly without any signs of disease.

Where does AI virus come from? Natural carriers are wild birds, especially waterfowl (ducks and geese). Swine are sometimes infected with influenza viruses. Influenza viruses may change and adapt to be able to infect different mammals and birds, including humans.

Do we have AI in our state? What would happen if my flock was diagnosed? We do not have AI in poultry in our state but are continuously monitoring for it. Every broiler flock is tested before processing and breeders and layers are tested several times during their productive life. Many hobby and small production flocks are also checked for the virus. An AI outbreak in commercial poultry would have disastrous consequences to the growers and industry. Appropriate steps would be taken for a rapid eradication of the virus from the area affected.



WHAT CAN THE GROWER DO TO HELP PREVENT HIS FARM FROM BECOMING INFECTED WITH AVIAN INFLUENZA? ● : Represents AI virus

1. ALWAYS use dedicated foot wear or use provided foot baths or boot wash to go into the poultry house.
2. Do not let poultry drink untreated surface water (from lakes, streams, ponds or rivers)
3. Clean up all outside feed spills promptly.
4. Bird proof houses; do not let wild birds build nests close by.
5. Do not let waterfowl become residents on nearby ponds.
6. Dispose of all mortality completely and promptly.
7. Do not enter your poultry house directly after hunting or after a contact with ANY other birds, including those from pet shops, zoos, live bird markets or people's backyards.
8. Do not come into contact with your poultry after visiting birds in another country.



ALWAYS PRACTICE BIOSECURITY

