



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

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# *News Release*

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For immediate distribution

## **AVIAN INFLUENZA DETECTED IN SASKATCHEWAN**

OTTAWA, September 27, 2007 – Highly pathogenic H7N3 avian influenza has been detected in a commercial poultry operation in Saskatchewan, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced today. This virus is not the same as the strain circulating in Asia, Africa and Europe, which has been associated with human illness. H7N3 is not normally associated with serious human illness.

Avian influenza viruses do not pose risks to food safety when poultry and poultry products are properly handled and cooked. In this case, the affected birds were not destined for immediate slaughter and were not producing eggs for human consumption.

All birds on the infected premises will be humanely euthanized and disposed of in accordance with provincial regulations and internationally accepted disease control guidelines. Normally, birds on any commercial operations within one kilometre of an infected premises would also be destroyed, but early information indicates that no such operations are present in the immediate area.

Once all birds have been removed, the CFIA will oversee the cleaning and disinfection of the barns, vehicles, equipment and tools to eliminate any infectious material that may remain.

To limit any potential virus spread, the CFIA will apply restrictions on the movement of poultry and poultry products within three kilometres of the infected premises. As an additional safeguard, any poultry operations within ten kilometres of the infected premises will be closely and regularly monitored for signs of illness.

The CFIA is investigating the recent movement of birds, bird products and equipment onto and off of the property. Through this activity, additional cases of infection may be detected.

The CFIA's actions are consistent with internationally recognized animal health guidelines and the CFIA's established avian influenza response protocols.

It may be difficult to identify the source of the virus, but the possibility of exposure to wild waterfowl—which are the natural hosts for the virus—cannot be discounted. Poultry owners are urged to take an active role in protecting their flocks by keeping them away from wild birds and areas frequented by wild birds.

Under the *Health of Animals Act*, the CFIA has authority to compensate producers for animals ordered destroyed during disease responses. The producer might also be eligible for assistance under other Government of Canada or provincial programs.

The Province of Saskatchewan and industry are actively collaborating in this response effort. The CFIA wishes to acknowledge the responsible actions of the owner, who reported signs of illness at the earliest possible moment. This commitment to animal health protection has maximized the Agency's ability to contain and eliminate this situation as quickly as possible.

New information emerging from the CFIA's activities will be provided to the public as it becomes available.

- 30 -

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The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon integrated into the letter "a".