

March 21, 2022

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Update and Biosecurity Advisory (Outdoor Access Exemption Request)**

To: California Organic Certifiers

The risk of diseases entering flocks is always present but can be mitigated. Enhanced biosecurity is critical in the face of ongoing disease outbreaks and the wild bird migration season. *Eurasian strain H5N1 has been detected in wild birds in the Pacific flyway. There have been 38 incidents of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI H5N1 Eurasian strain) detected in backyard and commercial domesticated birds and hundreds of incidents of HPAI detected in wild birds in numerous states in the United States (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai>).* Continued reports of the current Avian Influenza outbreak in the U.S. are concerning because of the similarities to the spread of HPAI H5N8 in the 2014-2015 outbreak and the devastating effect of current outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in Europe where the virus has caused substantial poultry losses.

*To protect California flocks, we have requested that poultry producers separate their poultry from wild birds if possible. We recommended housing poultry inside and discouraging any interaction with wild birds, particularly migrating waterfowl.*

We ask that Organic Certifiers permit California producers to move their birds in during the migration season (through the end of June 2022) and exempt the outdoor access requirement in order to remain certified during this time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Thank you for your cooperation.

For more information about Avian Influenza, please visit:  
[www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/avianinfluenza](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/avianinfluenza)

Sincerely,

Dr. Annette Jones  
State Veterinarian  
California Department of Food and Agriculture

