



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

October 7, 2026

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

To: California Organic Certifiers

Over the past two months, California has had detections of HPAI in backyard poultry flocks and in wild waterfowl and raptors along the Pacific Flyway. Updates for California poultry specifically can be found on our [Avian Influenza Website](#). Detections of HPAI continue to also be found in domestic and wild birds nationally ([USDA APHIS H5N1 Influenza Detections](#)). After multiple years of repeat outbreaks, wild waterfowl and raptors remain the largest threats of H5N1 introduction to domestic poultry in California. The risk of disease entering domestic poultry flocks is always present but at elevated risk right now due to waterfowl migration.

To protect California flocks, we are recommending that poultry producers separate poultry from wild birds by keeping them indoors and discouraging any interaction with wild birds, particularly migrating or resident waterfowl and raptors. This action is particularly important if there is ANY water or agricultural fields in the vicinity that may attract and congregate wild waterfowl.

We ask that Organic Certifiers permit California producers to keep their birds indoors through December 31st, 2026 and exempt the outdoor access requirement to remain certified during this time. We will evaluate an extension of this request based on ongoing detections in wild and domestic birds as we approach winter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Thank you for your cooperation.

For more information and updates about Avian Influenza, please visit:
www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/avianinfluenza

Sincerely,

Dr. Amanda Murray, DVM, MPVM, PhD
State Veterinarian
California Department of Food and Agriculture

