



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

October 22, 2018

## **Poultry Disease Update and Biosecurity Advisory**

To: California Poultry Producers

The risk of diseases entering your flock is always present but can be mitigated. Enhanced biosecurity is critical in the face of ongoing disease outbreaks, the onset of wild bird migration season, and the upcoming season bringing cool, moist conditions where viruses thrive.

There have been five confirmed cases of H7N3 low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) in Stanislaus County. While LPAI is not as fast-spreading and in some cases asymptomatic, it has the potential to mutate to highly pathogenic avian influenza which is highly lethal to poultry. Some strains of avian influenza (AI) can also be a public health concern. While these strains currently have not been found in wild birds in California, they have been found in migrating and domestic birds in other parts of the world. Even common strains of AI can mutate to a more dangerous form, so vigilance is critical.

In Southern California, 172 virulent Newcastle disease (VND) infected premises have been identified, and new cases continue to be found. VND, previously known as exotic Newcastle disease, is a fast-spreading virus that affects the respiratory, nervous and digestive system of numerous bird species, but most severely in poultry. The last outbreak in the U.S. occurred in Southern California in 2002, resulting in the death of 3.2 million birds and a response cost of over \$160 million. While wild birds are not thought to play a major role in the spread of VND, they can become infected or mechanically carry virus.

*To protect your flocks, we are requesting that you separate poultry from wild birds if you can. As much as possible, house poultry inside and discourage any interaction with wild birds, particularly migrating waterfowl.*

The risk to each farm may be different, so it is important to consider your situation when complying with this request. If you are certified organic and want to make changes to housing, you must contact your certifier *before* altering confinement and meet their requirements to remain certified. This heightened biosecurity effort will be important through next April when migration typically ends and warmer weather begins. Thank you for your cooperation.

For updates and more information about LPAI and VND, please visit:

[www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/avianinfluenza](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/avianinfluenza) and [www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/VND](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/VND)

Sincerely,

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

