

October 1, 2019

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 the ongoing virulent Newcastle disease (vND)* incident.

Since May 2018, over 1.2 million birds have died or been euthanized because of this devastating virus, and the Regional Quarantine in Southern California is still in effect.

Thanks to cooperation from Southern California residents in very difficult circumstances, and a tremendous commitment from emergency response teams, there have been no new positive detections of the disease since early September, 2019. CDFA and the United States Department of Agriculture are continuing to test poultry in areas previously known to have infected birds in order to find any remaining pockets of disease. Now is a crucial time for adherence to biosecurity as we move closer to declaring freedom from vND.

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, you should continue to house poultry indoors and separate from wild birds where possible.**

The risk to each farm may be different, so it is important to consider your situation when complying with this recommendation. If you are certified organic and want to make changes to housing, you must contact your certifier *before* altering confinement. In the event your certifier resists approval of this state-issued recommendation, please have them contact our department for verification. Because we are not entirely sure where the next threat from virulent Newcastle disease will be detected, please maintain this heightened biosecurity effort through December 31, 2019, when we will provide an updated risk evaluation. Thank you for your cooperation.

For more information about the current vND incident, please visit:
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/newcastle_disease_info.html

Sincerely,

Dr. Annette Jones, D.V.M.
Director and State Veterinarian

***Virulent 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 United States occurred in Southern California in 2002, resulting in the death of 3.2 million birds and a response cost of over \$160 million.

