



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

July 1, 2018

Virulent Newcastle Disease Update and Biosecurity Advisory

All poultry owners in California:

Virulent Newcastle disease was confirmed in backyard exhibition birds on May 17, 2018 in southern California triggering a joint United States Department of Agriculture and California Department of Food and Agriculture emergency response. This virus, which is normally not found in the United States, is highly contagious and lethal to poultry, and therefore also potentially carries billion dollar trade impacts *if detected in commercial flocks*.

The last time this virus was introduced into the United States was in 2002, also in southern California. At that time, the virus was initially detected in backyard flocks and eventually spilled over into 22 commercial poultry farms, resulting in the death of 3.2 million birds and a response cost of over \$160 million. Aggressive actions are currently being taken to control the disease in backyard exhibition birds and tighten biosecurity around commercial premises to reduce this risk.

To date, we are still working to characterize the extent and potential duration of the outbreak, and continue to confirm multiple cases per week. Most of the cases are in focal areas of San Bernardino and Riverside county, but because it is easy to hide and potentially move a sick bird, we ask that all commercial producers continue elevated biosecurity measures. Examples include: employee education intended to minimize the risk of inadvertently carrying virus onto your facility, ensuring that personal protective gear or dedicated shoes and clothing are used when entering live bird areas, controlling human and equipment traffic flow to best protect your flocks, verifying that your cleaning and disinfection procedures are adequate and are being followed every time, and most important, strictly limiting people that come into contact with your live bird areas, including a temporary deferral of government inspection where possible.

While wild birds are not thought to play a major role in the spread of Newcastle, they can become infected or mechanically carry the virus. Therefore, we are also asking that those that can separate their poultry from wild birds, do so. Further, if there are loose poultry (i.e. not in designated confinement areas) on your premises, if possible, capture and isolate or euthanize them.

We will reassess the risk by Sept. 1, 2018 and rescind or modify this request based on additional disease investigation information. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

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

