

HPAI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza (AI), a virus affecting birds and poultry that is commonly known as the “bird flu,” is an infectious disease of birds caused by type A strains of the influenza virus. There are both low-pathogenic and high-pathogenic strains; the strains currently causing concern in the U.S. are highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

USDA confirms that avian influenza is not a food safety issue or a public health risk.

What should Americans know about the U.S. outbreak?

America’s egg farmers understand and share consumers’ concerns about avian influenza. In the U.S., the strains have not affected humans and are not considered a risk to public health, as confirmed by USDA. There is no evidence that bird flu can be transmitted through food.

Can I catch AI from the eggs or meat I eat?

No, there is no evidence that bird flu can be transmitted through food. As a reminder, however, it is important to properly handle and cook all egg, chicken and turkey products to the recommended temperatures to reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses.

Can humans contract the disease?

Bird flu is an animal health issue, not a human health concern. It is extremely rare for bird flu to affect humans, because most people will never have direct and prolonged contact with an infected bird. Egg farms follow strict safety protocols to protect their workers from potential exposure to avian influenza.

How is avian influenza transmitted to commercial farms?

Avian influenza is transmitted through infected wild birds and waterfowl, either through direct contact with other birds or indirectly if the disease is unintentionally carried onto a farm by birds, equipment, vehicles or other means. Biosecurity protocols followed on America’s egg farms are intended to prevent any indirect transmission of the disease.

What are America’s egg farmers doing about HPAI prevention?

America’s egg farmers continue to be vigilant in keeping their flocks free from disease and assuring the safety of the eggs and egg products provided for customers. Farmers are committed to safeguarding the food supply and ensuring that eggs are still readily available.

There is close collaboration among egg farmers and state and federal regulatory authorities to limit the occurrence of this disease and to continue AI surveillance programs.

What preventive measures are in place to prevent the disease from spreading between flocks?

America’s egg farmers work around the clock to protect their hens and farms from bird flu and to ensure the safety of the nation’s egg supply. Biosecurity – measures taken on farms to prevent disease – is a priority for farmers every day—not just during a disease outbreak.

What do farmers do to keep their farms biosecure?

Commercial egg farms employ rigorous biosecurity guidelines, including, but not limited to:

- Restricting on-farm access to essential employees only;
- Housing hens indoors to prevent access to wild birds and waterfowl;
- Limiting movement (employees, equipment, vehicles, etc.) between farms and barns;
- Requiring protective gear for anyone who enters egg farms; and
- Working closely with animal health experts and veterinarians to monitor the health of flocks.

What can consumers expect from egg prices and supply?

Eggs are still one of the most affordable and best sources of high-quality protein; however, the rapid spread of HPAI may have a disruptive effect on the availability of eggs, which may lead to price changes.

Egg farmers across the US are committed to doing all that is possible to minimize disruption, safeguard the food supply and ensure that eggs still are readily available.

