



The Chick Papers

A Monthly Newsletter from the Georgia Poultry Laboratory

April 2016

GPLN Prepares for the Threat of the Avian Influenza Virus (AIV)

A Reflection on Some of the Preparedness Activities

It is a well-known fact that AIV has never been detected in Georgia's gallinaceous birds. We look rigorously for the presence of AIV by routinely sampling hundreds of thousands of birds per year using antibody detection tests and PCR analysis. The table below lists some of the highlights of Georgia's prevention strategies and improvement activities in preparing for an AIV event.

Date	Activity	Purpose & Descriptions
Spring 2015	Purchase Trailer, Foamer & Accessories	With the addition of a North Carolina style trailer unit, the number of depopulation units available for immediate use has grown to five, in addition to an existing "whole house" Kifco foaming unit.
Spring 2015	GPLN Assisted with Depopulation in MN	Zach Baker and Len Chappell participated in the depopulation of more than 334,000 turkeys and commercial layers in Minnesota during their Highly Pathogenic AIV (HPAI) event.
Summer 2015	Diagnostic Kits Provided	Every commercial customer was given a kit containing adequate swabs and BHI tubes to test 300 birds. This allows customers to collect samples & deliver them to the lab quickly on AIV suspects.
Summer 2015	Joint Meetings with Partner Labs	Had round table discussions about logistics of sample submissions, testing capacities and lab resources. The roles of the Athens and Tifton Labs as well as PDRC during an HPAI event were explored.
Fall 2015	Georgia AIV Hotline Created	Allows for AIV risk assessment and immediate response to flocks that are having symptoms consistent with AIV infections. The County Extension Agents help with the initial assessments.
Fall 2015	Premise ID Field Added to LIMS	The GPLN Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) added a field for Premise ID to help process pooled swab samples more efficiently.
Fall 2015	Depopulation Exercises	The GPLN and GDA Depopulation Teams have jointly practiced foam production in training classes and field exercises six times in the last eight months.
Fall 2015	Biosafety Level 3 Lab Equipment Additions	PCR Thermocycler networking was added and biological safety cabinets were installed to facilitate the extraction and PCR testing of swabs sent to the laboratory.
Fall 2015	Purchased Roche 480 Thermocycler	Increased PCR throughput to 400 samples per eight hour shift. Before acquiring this new machine, the number of samples that could be run per day was 200 (two PCR runs per eight hour shift).
Fall 2015	Grower Meetings on Biosecurity	Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala and Dr. Doug Anderson presented information to commercial growers on how to increase biosecurity at farms.
Fall 2015	Scanning Technology to Receive Swabs	Allows BHI tubes to be processed faster than ever before and includes an automatic generation of a template to be used with the PCR software.
Fall 2015	EMRS Training Course Attended	Dr. Doug Waltman and Len Chappell attended a training course on how to use the USDA's Emergency Response Management System to manage an AI event.
Winter 2015	GPS Database Update	With updated grower GPS coordinates, the lab can more easily set up control zones and locate flocks within the control zones.
Winter 2015	GPLN attends SE Vet Permitting Meeting	Dr. Doug Waltman & Len Chappell attended the regional Southeastern meeting to discuss issues related to Highly Pathogenic AIV (HPAI) and the poultry industry.
Winter 2015	Hotline Number on the GPLN Homepage	The backyard owner completes an AIV survey online and submits it to the AIV Response Team via email. High-risk flock owners are called immediately & low-risk owners are called within 24 hours.
Winter 2015	AI Portal System	Allows authorized users to view AIV results real-time from any location in the USA just by dialing into the secure website. This will be accessible for GPLN, GDA and USDA authorized users.
Winter 2015	Indiana Lab Visited by GPLN Staff	Len Chappell spent two weeks at the Purdue University Laboratory during Indiana's AIV events, observing high throughput testing at the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.
Winter 2015	BSL-3 Lab Exercise	The lab was converted from BSL-2 to BSL-3 mode and sample handling, processing and testing were rehearsed and evaluated. All AIV testing during an event will be performed in the BSL-3 lab.
Winter 2015	GPLN Attends Live Bird Market Meeting	Jessi Kimbrell & Len Chappell attended the Live Bird Market System Working Group meeting with discussions on the testing, composting, cleaning and disinfection of AIV positive premises.
Spring 2016	Increased AIV-PCR Certified Technicians	Pending RT-PCR:AI proficiency results; the number of technicians certified to perform PCR:AI will be increased from three to six technicians.

GPLN Events



Becca Sattes

- April 8: Radford Murphy’s retirement party.
- April 11: Becca Sattes joined the NPIP department as a part-time Field Technician.
- April 15: Sam’s Club representative Jackie Braun provided a membership presentation, free “goodies” and Sam’s Club savings opportunities.
- April 22: Kimberly Cobb, Branch Manager and Vice President of Regions Bank, presented “Building Your Financial Confidence” as part of the Financial Fundamentals seminar series.
- April 27: Holly Gilstrap joined the Bacteriology Department as a full-time Laboratory Technician II at the Gainesville Lab.



Holly Gilstrap



GPLN employees enjoying the Sam’s Club presentation.

Right: Radford Murphy (green shirt, left) retired from GPLN with 61 years of service. We will miss him greatly.



South and North Georgia USDA Animal Health Technicians visited the Gainesville Lab for a tour and discussions about the Lab’s role in poultry diagnostics. (L-R) Jalesa Dixon, Laura Mora, Cassie Barkley, Audra Baker, Mark Ellgass, Mike Faotsop, Kolt Owenby, Daniel Median, Dr. Martin Smeltzer, Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala, and Alexis Graham.

Meetings and Presentations

- April 12-14: Len Chappell assisted in the wet lab exercises at the NPIP Avian Influenza Workshop at PDRC in Athens, GA.
- April 13: GPLN Board of Directors meeting.
- April 22: Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala attended the Georgia Poultry Federation Annual Meeting at Young Harris College.