

The Chick Papers

Avian Influenza (AI) – What Poultry Growers Need to Know


The virus is carried by healthy waterfowlbut can make domestic poultry very sick!

Definitions: AI is a virus disease of poultry. AI can be of low pathogenicity (LPAI), causing mild disease, or of high pathogenicity (HPAI), causing severe disease and mortality. There are different strains of AI viruses: examples are H1N1 or H5N2. Some AI viruses can mutate and become HPAI viruses.

What are the clinical signs (symptoms) of AI? LPAI in chickens and turkeys resembles any other mild respiratory disease (noise, swollen faces, conjunctivitis – photos 1, 2). In breeders, it can also cause a production drop, and birds may produce soft shelled eggs (photo 7). With HPAI, the birds may become very quiet, not eat or drink, have diarrhea, and discolored combs and feet (photos 3, 4, 5, 6). Birds may also die suddenly without any signs of disease.

Where does AI virus come from? Natural carriers are wild birds, especially waterfowl (ducks and geese). Swine are sometimes infected with influenza viruses. Influenza viruses may change and adapt to be able to infect different mammals and birds, including humans.

Do we have AI in our state? What would happen if my flock was diagnosed? We do not have AI in poultry in our state but are continuously monitoring for it. Every broiler flock is tested before processing and breeders and layers are tested several times during their productive life. Many hobby and small production flocks are also checked for the virus. An AI outbreak in commercial poultry would have disastrous consequences to the growers and industry. Appropriate steps would be taken for a rapid eradication of the virus from the area affected.




WHAT CAN THE GROWER DO TO HELP PREVENT HIS FARM FROM BECOMING INFECTED WITH AVIAN INFLUENZA?

1. ALWAYS use dedicated foot wear or use provided foot baths or boot wash to go into the poultry house.
2. Do not let poultry drink untreated surface water (from lakes, streams, ponds or rivers)
3. Clean up all outside feed spills promptly.
4. Bird proof houses; do not let wild birds build nests close by.
5. Do not let waterfowl become residents on nearby ponds.
6. Dispose of all mortality completely and promptly.
7. Do not enter your poultry house directly after hunting or after a contact with ANY other birds, including those from pet shops, zoos, live bird markets or people's backyards.
8. Do not come into contact with your poultry after visiting birds in another country.

STOP

ALWAYS PRACTICE BIOSECURITY



January 2014, Perdue, David Strayer (DVM), Sara Spivey (DVM), Sean Farwell (DVM) all ©; Translators: Suzanne Davis, Chris Quinn. Made possible by USDA emergency agreement

GPLN Recommends to place this poster on all company owned farms and use it as a training tool !!

Tours and Visitors:

- Georgia Farm Bureau Poultry Advisory Committee Tours Lab: On March 3, Farm Bureau had a business meeting with their Poultry Advisory Committee in the GPLN Conference Room followed by a tour of the lab. The group consisted of 15 representatives.
- Pilgrims Complexes Visited the New Lab: On March 4, a group from Pilgrims Gainesville, Athens, Carrollton, and Canton live production divisions met for company presentations and discussions on breeder management followed by a tour of the laboratory. Dr. Shivi Rao was the primary Pilgrim's speaker.
- Georgia Congressman and His Staffer Toured the Gainesville Lab: On March 11, Congressman Doug Collins was given a tour of the Gainesville Laboratory by Dr. Doug Waltman. His staffer, Ms. Sally Larson was also given a tour of the lab by Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala. Much discussion focused on the NPIP program, of which Sally had a particularly high interest.
- Perdue University Alumni Visited the New Gainesville Laboratory. On March 12, a group of 30 from Perdue University Agriculture Alumni Association visited the Gainesville Lab for a tour of the new facility. These Perdue groups have been touring the country since 1960 to learn more about different state's agriculture and agribusiness. This gave them the opportunity to learn of Joe Hatfield, one of the founders of Fieldale Farms.
- South Carolina NPIP Administrators Toured the New Lab: On March 18, Dr. Julie Helm and Dr. Alberto Van-Ofphen met with Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala and Len Chappell for discussions on applications of data querying functionality in Lab Information Management System for poultry diagnostic labs.
- Fieldale Farms Toured the Gainesville Laboratory: On March 18 & 19, a large group of Fieldale Farms employees were given a mezzanine tour of the new Lab. GPLN hosts Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala, Dr. Doug Waltman, and Len Chappell answered questions from the captive audience as the tour proceeded.

- **USDA Intern Observed Poultry Diagnostic Testing at the Gainesville Laboratory:** On March 20, Christopher Greco toured the new lab and then had the opportunity to shadow several technicians as they performed their diagnostic assays. Chris is a 2016 UGA DVM candidate for 2016 and Class Representative.

GPLN Employee News

- **New Lab Technician in the Necropsy Department:** Early in March, Nancy del Rio Parra joined the GPLN Team in the Necropsy Department. Nancy will assist Dr. James Davis in necropsy activities, cleaning and disinfection, and performance of avian influenza antigen capture testing protocols. Nancy is a student at the University of North Georgia Poultry Science Department (Gainesville campus)

GPLN Events

- **UGA Poultry Science Professor Lectured at GPLN:** On March 24, Dr. Brian Fairchild spoke to the GPLN employees on the history of the Georgia Poultry industry. His discussions included the overall rank of Georgia within the United States on broiler and table egg production. He included the history of the development of the contracts between growers and companies. Also, he explained the UGA Poultry Science research endeavors with the poultry industry.

- **GPLN and APHIS Officials Met with the Georgia Layer Industry:** On March 26, Dr. Martin Smeltzer and Dr. Louise Dufour-Zavala talked to commercial layer (table egg) managers on their company's preparedness for a potential avian influenza event in Georgia. Enhancing biosecurity measures now, and the required documentation to move egg products during an AI event were a few of the many items discussed in great detail.



Layer Reps Watching Foaming Demonstration

- **GPLN Serology Department Hosted Serology Workshop.** On March 25, a group of ten University of North Georgia Poultry Science students performed a serology assay known as the enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) using commercial antibody kits. The group was given a lecture by Brenda Glidewell and instructed on the ELISA protocol. The students were given previously tested field sample as unknown to practice with the ELISA protocol.

- **GPLN Staff Gave Talks at Upland Game Bird Meeting :** On March 31,

Dr. Doug Anderson hosted an upland game bird meeting at the UGA Tifton Campus. Dr Anderson, Dr. Martin Smeltzer, James Brantley, and Jessi Kimbrell talked about diseases, NPIP and NPIP recommended testing, and the current AI situations in this country.

- **GPLN Represented on Career Day at a Local College:** On March 10, Jessi Kimbrell represented GPLN in Careers in Agriculture Day at the Gainesville Campus of the University of North Georgia. Jessi spoke with students touring the booth about the structure of our laboratory and provided handouts with detailed information.

- **Saint Patrick Day Breakfast:** On March 17, all Gainesville Lab employees enjoyed a Breakfast and fellowship in celebration of St. Patrick Day.



Nancy del Rio Parra



UNG Students Performing Serological Testing