

Avian Influenza Update

Recent avian influenza tests showed no signs of the virus in North American waterfowl as they migrated during fall 2006 and spring 2007.

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Tips to Keep Avian Influenza at Bay

For Dr. Richard Fulton's tips on keeping many infectious diseases--including avian influenza—from devastating your flocks, his Michigan State website. Click on MSU Poultry Bulletins and Resources, then Biosecurity Small Flock. Click to continue>> Recent avian influenza tests showed no signs of the virus in North American waterfowl as they migrated during Fall 2006 and Spring 2007.

According to Richard Fulton, DVM, Ph.D., an avian pathologist at Michigan State University, over 150,000 test samples from migratory waterfowl revealed no evidence of the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus. Surveillance results from the Fall 2007 migration hadn't been published as of this writing.

"Farmers should be aware that there still continues to be a problem with the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain in other parts of the world," says Fulton, who is currently working with USAID to help halt avian influenza's spread in developing countries. "We can still get it in the U.S. from smuggled products or birds from infected countries, and to a lesser degree from migrating waterfowl."

The World Organisation of Animal Health has reported the disease among birds in Asia, Africa, the Pacific, Europe and the Near East (the U.S. has implemented a ban on importing birds and avian products from affected countries).

As of October 17, 2007, the World Health Organization had confirmed 331 human cases, with 203 deaths. Most people contracted the infection through direct contact with ill or dead poultry; the virus hasn't yet mutated into a form capable of sustained transmission between people.

Fulton stresses that implementing biosecurity measures can help keep many infectious diseases--including avian influenza—from devastating our flocks.