Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Confirmed in Washington County

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has identified a case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a backyard flock in Washington County. This is Wisconsin's first confirmed case of HPAI in a domestic flock since May.

This year, 23 flocks in 15 counties have been confirmed with HPAI. All infected flocks are depopulated to prevent spread of the disease. This week, Indiana and Minnesota have also announced new cases of HPAI in domestic flocks, and there have been recent detections among wild birds in Wisconsin. The fall and winter could be a critical time for virus transmission, so DATCP urges all poultry owners to implement strong biosecurity measures to protect their birds from the disease.

HPAI viruses are highly contagious and often fatal to domestic poultry. The disease can be spread by contact with infected birds, equipment, or clothing worn by anyone working with the animals. Signs of HPAI include:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy or appetite
- Decrease in egg production; soft, misshapen eggs
- Purple discoloration of wattles, comb, and legs
- Difficulty breathing
- Runny nose, coughing, sneezing
- Stumbling or falling down
- Diarrhea

DATCP reminds Wisconsin poultry owners to register their premises. State law requires that all livestock owners register where their animals are kept. Registration helps animal health officials communicate with flock owners during disease outbreaks.

To report increased mortality or signs of illness among domestic birds, contact DATCP at (608) 224-4872 (business hours) or (800) 943-0003 (after hours and weekends). For updates on how the virus is affecting domestic birds in Wisconsin, visit DATCP's HPAI webpage.

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