Important Message to Poultry Exhibitors from the Wayne County Senior Fair Board
September 8, 2022

Dear Market and Exhibition Poultry Exhibitors,

You may have heard, there has been a case of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) detected in a backyard flock in Ashland County and a commercial chicken flock in Defiance County, although detections do not present an immediate public health concern.

**Background from ODA press release:**

"Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Ashland and Defiance Counties"

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (September 6, 2022) - Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been detected in a backyard flock in Ashland County and a commercial chicken flock in Defiance County. The positive detections were confirmed by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS). The samples were first tested at the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and confirmed at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

HPAI is a highly contagious virus that spreads quickly and can be fatal to flocks and devastating to poultry owners, both commercial and non-commercial. HPAI can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and is carried by free flying waterfowl such as ducks, geese, and shorebirds."

**What To Expect at the fair**

The OSU Extension Staff, Committee Members, and our Senior Fair Board Members met with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) State Veterinarian regarding our fair and what this looks like for us. We are taking precautions to make every effort to keep our fair safe for Exhibitors and birds. We do not want to take away this once a year opportunity for our 4-H youth to show off all their hard work from over the summer.

We are moving forward with a full poultry show as scheduled. As a poultry exhibitor we are giving you the information so that you can make a wise decision for you and your flock at home. **If any birds in your flock are showing signs of illness, we insist that you not bring any of your flock to the fair this year.**

If you do choose to bring your poultry to the fair, you are expected to keep your exhibit for the duration of the 2022 Wayne County Fair. Only those released by the Wayne County Fair Veterinarian will be excused as stated in the Jr. Fair Rule book page 7 rule #44 (44. Rules: • On Thursday night, all animals are to be in their assigned pens/cages/stalls by 8:00 PM (i.e. no “exercising” or “consolidating” animals) until their designated release time unless excused by the fair veterinarian and Department Superintendent.).

If we find a case of the HPAI here on the fairgrounds during the fair, we have been informed that all poultry exhibits could be quarantined until released by the ODA Veterinarian.

**Signs of the disease are as follows:**

- Lethargy
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased water consumption
- Respiratory signs including nasal discharge
- Purple discoloration of wattles and cobs
- Swelling of head and eyelids
- Drop in egg production
- Sudden death
How to Help STOP the spread of the HPAI Disease
We are implementing bio security measures in our Poultry/Rabbit barn. There will be more hand sanitizing stations readily available. We encourage everyone to wash your hands before and after feeding and/or handling your birds. We strongly encourage all members to maintain a clean exhibit throughout the fair. The ODA Veterinarian has stated that a clean pen can help discourage the spread of virus. There will be signage posted encouraging the public not to touch the birds.

The best defense against HPAI is **vigilant disease prevention**. Biosecurity and best management practices include:

- **Prevent contact with wild birds and waterfowl.** Keep birds indoors when possible.
- **Keep visitors to essential personnel only.** Only allow those who care for your poultry to have contact with them and make sure they follow biosecurity principles.
- **Wash your hands before and after contact with live poultry.** Use soap and water. If using a hand sanitizer, first remove manure, feathers, and other materials from your hands.
- **Provide disposable boot covers (preferred) and/or disinfectant footbaths for anyone having contact with your flock.** If using a footbath, remove all droppings, mud or debris from boots and shoes using a long-handled brush BEFORE stepping in. Always keep it clean.
- **Establish a rodent and pest control program.** Deliver, store, and maintain feed, ingredients, bedding, and litter to limit exposure to and contamination from wild animals.
- **Use drinking water sourced from a contained supply** (well or municipal system). Do not use surface water for drinking or cleaning.
- **Clean and disinfect tools and equipment before moving them to a new poultry facility.** Trucks, tractors, tools, and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected prior to entering or exiting the property. Do not move or reuse anything that cannot be cleaned.
- **Look for signs of illness.** Monitor egg production and death loss, discoloration and/or swelling of legs, wattles and combs, labored breathing, reduced feed/water consumption.

If you would like more information here is a short little clip on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), [https://go.osu.edu/22poultrybiosecurity](https://go.osu.edu/22poultrybiosecurity).