

**AVIAN INFLUENZA
(BIRD FLU), (FOWL PLAGUE)**

DESCRIPTION:

Avian Influenza (AI) is a viral disease of poultry and numerous other types of birds that is potentially highly contagious and fatal.

CAUSE:

The infection is caused by influenza viruses which may be classified as low or highly pathogenic based on the severity of the illness they cause. Many subtypes of influenza viruses exist, most of which are low pathogenic.

TRANSMISSION:

Migratory waterfowl, transportation of poultry/poultry equipment and movement of people create risks for the spread of AI into poultry. It is by direct contact with infected birds, as well as contact with contaminated manure, clothing, vehicles, egg crates, etc. that serve as aids in the spread of the virus.

CLINICAL SIGNS:

Low pathogenic viruses - typically cause very few or no clinical signs in infected birds.

Highly pathogenic viruses (HPAI) - produce a systemic infection and usually involve some or all of the following systems: nervous, respiratory, reproductive, circulatory, gastrointestinal.

Some common clinical signs w/HPAI include:

Sudden death with no obvious signs (up to 100% mortality)
coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, severe depression, drastic decrease in egg production, swelling of head, comb, wattles and hocks, diarrhea, purple discoloration (cyanosis) of comb, wattles and legs.

LESIONS:

Low pathogenic - few to none

HPAI - edema of head, comb, wattles

- hemorrhage and congestion of legs

- hemorrhage on serosal and mucosal surfaces of intestines

DIAGNOSIS:

Virus Isolation

Serology - AGID and ELISA testing

PREVENTION/CONTROL:

- Good biosecurity is essential
 - Prevent the introduction of the virus
 - All in - all out practices
 - Control people/equipment traffic
- Surveillance
 - Early detection through active surveillance of game birds, live-bird markets, slaughter plants
- Proper reporting, quarantine, movement restrictions, proper disposal
- Vaccination
 - The use of vaccines may be restricted
 - Protects against clinical disease, but does not prevent infection

WHAT IS THE RISK TO HUMAN HEALTH?

In some instances, HPAI viruses can be infectious to people. Although considered rare, poultry personnel and avian health-care specialists should wear adequate safety equipment and follow appropriate sanitary and disinfection procedures when on premises known, or suspected to harbor the HPAI virus.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS SIGNS

If birds have signs of HPAI or may have possible exposure to infected birds, immediately notify state or federal animal health officials.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.aphis.usda.gov
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/htm
USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
(301) 734-8073