OHIO WORKING WITH FEDERAL AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF AVIAN INFLUENZA

Ohio has no reported cases of avian influenza

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (March 29, 2017) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is working aggressively with Ohio’s poultry industry and federal partners to prevent the spread of avian influenza. Ohio has no reported cases of avian influenza, and together regulators, farmers and veterinarians are working to protect the health of the state’s bird population.

ODA asked the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) to grant relief which now allows organic poultry producers to temporarily confine their flocks and maintain organic certification. This is a critical biosecurity measure requested by Ohio producers, and one ODA encourages all poultry producers, including small-scale backyard farmers, to implement.

“Preventing contact between flocks and wild birds is one of the most important steps any farmer can take to keep animals healthy and prevent the spread of avian influenza,” said Dr. Tony Forshey, state veterinarian. “I thank USDA-AMS for their work and recognition of the critical importance of this request and urge all Ohio poultry producers, large and small, to take aggressive biosecurity measures to protect the health of all of our state’s birds.”

Many Ohio farms have already taken aggressive actions to implement heightened biosecurity measures that protect poultry. USDA’s memo reinforces the importance for all producers to do so.
Ohio producers work with their organic certifying agents to determine the proper method of temporary confinement.

Multiple cases of low pathogenic avian influenza have been found in Georgia, Kentucky, Alabama, Wisconsin and Tennessee. Highly pathogenic avian influenza has been diagnosed in Tennessee. Authorities in those states have taken steps to contain the virus. ODA works with Ohio’s poultry farmers, state and federal partners to monitor for avian influenza. All producers are urged to monitor their flocks for signs of illness and implement strict biosecurity measures. The safety of poultry and eggs for food consumption is not affected.

If you see clinical signs of illness in your flocks, please contact your veterinarian or the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at (614) 728-6220.

- 30 -

Editor’s Note: A letter from USDA-AMS regarding the memo is below.

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