



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

PO Box 1163, Richmond, Virginia 23218

www.vdacs.virginia.gov

Joseph W. Guthrie
Commissioner

March 30, 2022

Dear Virginia Poultry Industry Contacts,

Like you all, we continue to be on pins and needles with respect to HPAI. Of course, that is not to say that life does not go on – we are in the start of a beautiful springtime, Easter is just a few weeks away, and day-in and day-out, you continue to produce the best, most wholesome, and affordable poultry products in the world.

But, HPAI preparedness and response planning is our highest priority right now. And with the detection of HPAI just announced in a commercial flock in a number of new states, including NC, as well as with detections in MD, DE, and in many other parts of the country, it may seem to be “just a matter of time” until we have a detection in commercial flock in Virginia. But there continues to be things that we can all do to minimize that risk – if you are vigilant about very close attention to your line of separation, you can definitely minimize the risk of AI virus being introduced to your flocks.

The number one risk factor for initial introduction to poultry, by far, appears to be contact with wild waterfowl or their feces. The pattern of infections that we have seen appear to correlate closely with the “flyway” patterns where wild waterfowl are frequently present. If you see any ducks or geese in the vicinity of your flocks, I highly encourage you to take all steps possibly to reduce the chances of any interaction. If ducks or geese are present around your flocks, please contact us, and we will be glad to facilitate contact with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, who can be of assistance in those cases.

Preventing any possible exposure to wild waterfowl, known carriers of HPAI, and their feces, is the single most important thing that you can do to prevent the disease in your birds at this time. Having a clear line of separation is critical – that means taking all steps possible to reduce the chances of a person or equipment bringing virus into your operation, as people or equipment cross the line separating your poultry from areas of routine traffic.

I realize that most of you are very well aware of the necessary biosecurity measures, and do these things on a daily basis. But with the recent detection in NC, I wanted to take the opportunity to once again remind everyone of the value of doing what you do every day, to focus on the primary risk factors, and encourage everyone to keep it up, especially until we get to warmer months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles C. Broaddus".

Charles C. Broaddus, DVM, PhD, DACT
State Veterinarian

Director, Division of Animal and Food Industry Services