

Branstad, Northey provide update on avian influenza in Iowa; Branstad declares state of emergency in Iowa

DES MOINES – Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad today was joined by Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey and Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Mark Schouten to provide an update on the ongoing efforts to stop the avian influenza outbreak in Iowa. In addition, Gov. Branstad announced that he is declaring a state of emergency in Iowa. The disaster proclamation can be viewed [here](#).

“While the avian influenza outbreak does not pose a risk to humans, we are taking the matter very seriously and believe declaring a state of emergency is the best way to make all resources available,” said Branstad. “Even before the virus began in Iowa, our office was monitoring the outbreak in other states. We’ll continue our work – as we’ve been doing since the first outbreak in Buena Vista County – in hopes of stopping the virus’ aggressive spread throughout Iowa.”

At time of press, 21 sites spanning 10 Iowa counties have cases that are either presumed positives or confirmed positives. The counties include: Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clay, Kossuth, Madison, O’Brien, Osceola, Pocahontas, Sac and Sioux.

“Iowa’s poultry farms are an important part of our state’s agriculture industry. This disease is having a far reaching impact and, unfortunately, it has continued to spread. We have seen tremendous support and coordination from state, federal and local partners and this emergency declaration will allow the state to continue to respond aggressively to this disease outbreak,” Northey said.

In addition, Gov. Branstad today declared a state of emergency due to the outbreak. The proclamation is effective immediately and will continue until May 31, 2015, at 11:59 p.m., unless sooner terminated or extended by the governor.

Background Information

The United States has the strongest Avian Influenza (AI) surveillance program in the world. As part of the existing USDA avian influenza response plans, Federal and State partners as well as industry are responding quickly and decisively to these outbreaks by following these five basic steps: 1) Quarantine – restricting movement of poultry and poultry-moving equipment into and out of the control area; 2) Eradicate – humanely euthanizing the affected flock(s); 3) Monitor region – testing wild and domestic birds in a broad area around the quarantine area; 4) Disinfect – kills the virus in the affected flock locations; and 5) Test – confirm that poultry farms in the area are free of the virus.

Continued: Branstad declares state of emergency in Iowa – May 1, 2015

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health are working directly with poultry workers at the affected facility to ensure proper precautions are being taken.

These virus strains can travel in wild birds without those birds appearing sick. People should avoid contact with sick/dead poultry or wildlife. If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds.

All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard flock owners, should continue to practice good biosecurity, prevent contact between their birds and wild birds, and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to state/federal officials, either through their state veterinarian at 515-281-5321 or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

Information will also be posted to the [Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's website](#).

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