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Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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To: North Carolina Poultry Producers

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS), Veterinary Division has been working in conjunction with United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA Wildlife Services (WS), and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) tracking the highly pathogenic Eurasian H5 avian influenza (HPAI) first identified in wild waterfowl in NC on January 16, 2022. Well over 100 wild birds have tested positive for HPAI in NC, and HPAI has been confirmed in 17 commercial poultry farms across seven states including Indiana, Kentucky, Delaware, Missouri, Maryland, Iowa, and South Dakota and confirmed in 10 backyard/independent flocks in seven states including Virginia, New York, Maine, Michigan, Iowa, Connecticut, and Missouri. The wild waterfowl populations that have tested positive in NC are still wintering in the Carolinas and the number of domestic poultry flocks testing positive is on the rise. We will continue to monitor the national situation and these wild waterfowl populations. We continue with our strong recommendation that all poultry owners continue to review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds.

Heightened biosecurity practices for domestic poultry are strongly recommended to prevent against avian influenza (AI) infection. Poultry producers need to take the following measures to protect their flocks:

- Keep all poultry with outdoor access indoors
- Maintain heightened biosecurity protocols
- Monitor flocks for unexplained increased mortality or clinical signs consistent with AI
 - Report any concerns immediately to your Veterinarian, State Animal Health Official, or Federal Animal Health Official

NCDA&CS, Veterinary Division is extending their strong recommendation to keep all commercial poultry indoors, including organic/free range flocks, for 30 days from today. Allowing these flocks to have access to outdoors during this time would put them at increased risk of contracting HPAI. NCDA&CS will continue to monitor this disease threat with our state and federal partners and this recommended time period may be extended.

If you or any others have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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