

What Would You Do If Your Birds Tested Positive for Avian Influenza?

By John Metzger, Metzger Farms This will happen in several poultry farms in the US within the next year, including game bird farms. It has in the past. What if it was your farm that tested positive? Would you know what to do? Would you know who you would turn to for advice? Does your veterinarian have much training with Avian Influenza (AI)? Does your state have experience in handling a positive AI? The answer is probably “No” for all of these.

But now, a valuable resource is being made available on the NAGA website. Go to www.mynaga.org and click on “Learn About Avian Influenza”. From there, you can go to a list of contacts for all states, or click on a section with information about laboratory testing for AI – which tests are done, why they are done and where they are done. There is a section with articles about past AI outbreaks. Learn important information about site cleanup – what works and what doesn’t, along with a section on what the federal government’s response plan is when the highly pathogenic AI strain tests positive.

Probably the most important section contains a list of each state’s Low Path AI Response Plan, and will show how your state will respond to a positive AI test. Who is responsible, what are the options, what follow up tests are done and how soon, etc. This is a disaster preparedness plan, and that information will help you to make the best decisions if the worst happens.

It is critical your state has a Low Path AI Response Plan. If your state does not have a plan, you will not be compensated by the federal government for any of your losses or cleanup! If nothing else, you need to look on the NAGA website to make sure your state has a plan. If your state is in the column without a plan, then it either does not have one or did not answer our repeated requests for a copy.

If you have additional information on AI that you feel should be included, please contact NAGA so we can include your documents or links to website information.

For the 99.5% of us that will never test positive for AI, this section is not important. But for those that do test positive, this information is critical and may save their farm and their sanity.

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