



# *Avian Science Notes*

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University of California - Cooperative Extension

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## What every backyard poultry keeper should be doing NOW

Unless you have been inside a solid, stone shell during 2015, you know that the poultry industries of the United States have been ravaged by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). As wild waterfowl once again begin their migration along the Pacific Flyway, danger looms large for ALL poultry keepers on the west coast. Dr. John Clifford, the Chief Veterinary Officer of the United States has said, "I believe it (HPAI) will be present in wild birds in all the U.S. flyways this fall."

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and our State Veterinarian are asking that all poultry be kept away from wild birds. What does this mean for the backyard poultry keepers? It is simple: wild birds and their droppings cannot have access to your poultry. For decades, you have been told that in order to protect your birds from climatic extremes and predators, you should have your birds confined. During the last Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak, you were once again reminded of this and instructed to have SOLID tops on your cages and/or flight pens. You want to make sure that a bird flying overhead or perching above your birds, cannot drop fecal material, feathers, or dander onto your birds.

What do you need? If you already have your birds confined and I trust as good poultry 4-Hers you do, then all you need is to add a solid cover. This could be plywood or a more elaborate material. Just make sure that it keeps overhead material from reaching your birds and that it is properly secured. You do not want your new "roof" to become a flying projectile in the next wind storm.

When do you need to do this? NOW, birds are already migrating down the Pacific Flyway.

For helpful information on backyard flock biosecurity, visit this link:

[http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal\\_health/pdfs/AI/BiosecurityForBackyardAndPetBirds.pdf](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/pdfs/AI/BiosecurityForBackyardAndPetBirds.pdf)

**Do NOT allow a 4-H poultry flock to be  
the headline for HPAI emerging in  
California.**

# How serious is the HPAI situation in the United States?

- The current Avian Influenza situation is the largest, and the worst, animal disease event in the history of the United States.
- In early July, Dr. Clifford testified in front of a U.S. Senate Committee that 7.5 million turkeys (3% of the national turkey population) and 42 million chickens (10% of the national egg-laying population) had been killed due to HPAI.
- The financial cost of the disease has been estimated to be in excess of \$3.3 BILLION.
- Due to fear of HPAI, poultry students at Iowa State University will not be allowed to step foot on the Iowa State Poultry Farm this fall term. All classes normally held at the Poultry Farm have been cancelled.
- The following State Fairs cancelled their poultry shows due to the threat of HPAI: Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

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## CALENDAR

### 2015

**Nov. 18-19** 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference, Louisville, Kentucky

### 2016

**Feb. 13** Humboldt Poultry Fanciers Association, Fairgrounds,  
Humboldt County Fairgrounds, Ferndale

**Feb. 27** California State Avian Bowl Qualifier, Greater California  
Society of Poultry Fanciers (GCSPF) Show, Fresno

**Feb. 27-28** GCSPF Show, Big Fresno Fairgrounds, Fresno

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