



TOWN OF WESTFORD
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

TOWN HALL
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The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) has confirmed Avian Flu in a flock of backyard birds in Dunstable. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the Massachusetts Department of Emergency Management (MEMA) are investigating the case and have asked that all surrounding communities share information on "how to protect your backyard birds"; which includes chickens.

Here are some simple steps bird owners can take to try to protect their flocks from avian influenza:

- Wild migratory birds are natural carriers for Avian Flu. Preventing wild birds from mixing with domestic flocks is essential to disease control. Poultry owners should assure their birds are kept away from wild birds, particularly waterfowl.
- Avoid unnecessary movement of poultry between locations and be aware of the potential to carry A-FLU contaminated materials onto properties where birds are kept.
- New birds should be completely isolated for at least one month prior to being added into the flock. Birds that are returning home from fairs or shows should also be isolated from the home flock as if they were new arrivals.
- Limit the number of people that have access to your flock.
- Do not share equipment with other bird owners without thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting between locations.
- Do not kiss your birds.
- Keep your distance (restrict access to your property and your birds).
- Keep it clean (clean and disinfect your clothes, shoes, equipment, and hands).
- Do not haul disease home (if you have been near other birds or bird owners, clean and disinfect poultry cages and equipment before going home).
- Do not risk disease from your neighbor (do not borrow lawn and garden equipment, tools, or poultry supplies from other bird owners).
- Know the warning signs (sudden increase in bird deaths, sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge, watery or green diarrhea, lack of energy, poor appetite, drop in egg production, swelling around the eyes, neck, and head, and purple discoloration of wattles, combs, and legs); and
- Report sick birds (call your local or State veterinarian, or USDA toll-free at 1-866-536-7593).

For more information:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/avian-influenza-protect-birds-qa.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/avian-influenza>

For Bird Hunters:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/attention-bird-hunters>