

Excerpts from USDA press release (May 25, 2018)

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is reminding bird owners about the need for biosecurity after the confirmation of a case of virulent Newcastle disease, and the identification of one additional presumptive positive case, in backyard birds in San Bernardino County, California. Virulent Newcastle disease has not been found in commercial poultry in the United States since 2003.

No human cases of Newcastle disease have ever occurred from eating poultry products. Properly cooked poultry products are safe to eat. In very rare instances people working directly with sick birds can become infected. Symptoms are usually very mild and limited to conjunctivitis. Infection is easily prevented by using standard personal protective equipment.

Additional cases will be reported on the [APHIS website](#) as they are confirmed.

Biosecurity Basics

APHIS is reminding anyone who owns, shows, or works with birds or poultry to increase their biosecurity practices immediately, especially in the Southern California area. Biosecurity includes simple steps like washing hands and scrubbing boots before and after entering an area with birds; cleaning and disinfecting tires and equipment before moving them off the property; and isolating any birds returning from shows for 30 days before placing them with the rest of the flock. Bird owners should also limit visitor contact with their birds, and not let anyone else who owns birds come in contact with their flock to avoid potentially sharing/spreading germs between flocks.

Background

Virulent Newcastle disease is a contagious and fatal viral disease affecting the respiratory, nervous and digestive systems of birds and poultry. The disease is so virulent that many birds and poultry die without showing any clinical signs. A death rate of almost 100 percent can occur in unvaccinated poultry flocks. Virulent Newcastle disease can infect and cause death even in vaccinated poultry.

Clinical signs of virulent Newcastle disease include: sudden death and increased death loss in the flock; sneezing; gasping for air; nasal discharge; coughing; greenish, watery diarrhea; decreased activity; tremors; drooping wings; twisting of the head and neck; circling; complete stiffness; and swelling around the eyes and neck. Images of some of these signs are available [here](#).