

Avian Influenza Information

Poultry Depopulation and Disposal Information

- The Nebraska Department of Agriculture is working with the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) as well as with our state colleagues in the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) to ensure the depopulation and disposal process meet strict standards for disease management, public health and safety and environmental responsibility.
- It has been determined that the most effective way to control the spread of highly pathogenetic avian influenza (HPAI) is to humanely euthanize (depopulate) the infected flocks as quickly as possible. Birds at the impacted farms that have not naturally succumbed to the disease will be humanely euthanized utilizing carbon dioxide.
- To minimize the risk of the virus spreading to additional premises, the bird carcasses will remain on the affected properties for disposal through onsite composting.
- According to USDA protocol for composting, compost piles are constructed in a manner that will include a thick layer of compost carbon, such as wood chips, on the bottom, middle and top of the pile to minimize odor, protect from scavenging animals and eliminate the possibility of wild birds landing on the pile and carrying the virus to new locations. An expert specializing in composting protocol is at the site to supervise the process. The NDEQ has reviewed and approved the locations of the onsite compost piles in consideration of possible environmental concerns.
- During the composting process the piles will be monitored daily by regulatory staff to ensure proper temperature levels are being maintained to effectively eliminate the virus. Staff also will be looking for evidence of any leakage, odor, disruption and evidence of pests. If any of these are identified, they will be reported and addressed immediately.
- The compost piles will remain in place at the affected properties until regulatory officials confirm the process has eliminated the virus from the material.
- NDA, USDA and NDEQ also continue to evaluate other carcass disposal methods.