

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza: Turkey Case-Control Study Updated Findings



Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is an extremely contagious disease often fatal to chickens and turkeys. To date, commercial turkey farms have made up 70 percent of all affected U.S. commercial poultry farms during the 2022–2023 HPAI outbreak. With support from State and national poultry organizations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA–APHIS) conducted a study to identify factors that may contribute to the transmission of HPAI virus to commercial turkeys.

Study Design

Commercial turkey farms that raise meat turkeys were eligible for the study, and 125 farms from 12 States participated. Case (infected) farms were confirmed positive for HPAI between January and October 2022. Control (non-infected) farms were from the same States but did not have HPAI during that timeframe.

Risk Factors Identified for HPAI Introduction on Turkey Farms



Proximity of waterfowl or shorebirds to the farm.



Turkey toms present on the farm.



Location within an existing control zone.



Raising both brooder and grower stages on the farm.



Rendering, an off-farm method of dead bird disposal.

Biosecurity Improvements to Reduce HPAI Risk

The results of the study concluded that producers could reduce their likelihood of contracting HPAI by investing in the following biosecurity improvements:



Provide access to and require workers to shower before entering the barn.



Provide a restroom facility (including portable) to crews visiting the farm. This reduces movement of people around the farm.



Install permanent wash stations and encourage employees to wash hands before entering the barn.



Work with a specialist to develop a wild bird management plan by calling USDA–APHIS: **1-866-487-3297**.