
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 18 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: H5/H7 LOW PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA RESPONSE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) is the Federal government’s poultry disease control program administered in cooperation with State Animal Health Officials and poultry producers. The General Conference Committee (GCC) of the NPIP is the Official Federal Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Agriculture on matters pertaining to poultry health. Among other duties, the GCC is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) on maintaining adequate NPIP funding to enable the Senior Coordinator to fully administer NPIP Provisions, advise USDA, APHIS with respect to administrative procedures and interpretations of the NPIP Provisions as contained in Title 9 *Code of Federal Regulations*, and to serve as a direct liaison between the NPIP and the United States Animal Health Association.

In 2002 H7N2 Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) was identified in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia costing producers hundreds of millions of dollars. A surveillance program was not in place to detect the potential spread of Avian Influenza (AI). In response, the NPIP LPAI program was created to provide an incentive for regular AI surveillance and to protect poultry producers through indemnification and compensation should H5/H7 LPAI be found.

AI remains a concern for poultry producers in the United States with the H5N2 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in 23 States in 2014–2015; H7N8 HPAI/LPAI in Indiana in 2016, H5N2 LPAI in Wisconsin in 2017, and H7N9 HPAI/LPAI in Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia in 2017. The NPIP is the only federal program responsible for H5/H7 LPAI surveillance, response, and containment activities. HPAI flocks are fully indemnified and compensated by USDA, APHIS, VS; however, indemnity and compensation for H5/H7 LPAI flocks is under discussion by VS. Disruption of indemnity and compensation for H5/H7 LPAI can result in loss of confidence and trust, and could potentially create a harmful impact on future responses to H5/H7 LPAI. This loss of confidence and trust discourages poultry producers (commercial, independent growers, and small flocks) from fully complying with NPIP testing programs and cooperating with State and federal regulatory authorities. Without dedicated funding for LPAI indemnity and compensation, there is no incentive for producers to participate in voluntary NPIP programs.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services provide a clear policy on H5/H7 Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) indemnity, compensation, and Initial State Response and Containment Plans. USAHA requests that policy be developed with input, participation, and feedback from the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Participants, Official State Agencies, and the NPIP, General Conference Committee. Changes will be presented to delegates for discussion and voting at the 2018 NPIP Biennial Conference. In addition, the USAHA requests that Congress appropriate new, no-year, mandatory fiscal appropriations dedicated for LPAI indemnity and compensation to ensure continued participation in NPIP H5/H7 LPAI programs.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services recognizes the concerns of the U.S. Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond. APHIS is continuing evaluation of its H5/H7 Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza indemnity and compensation policies and will hold a meeting this winter or early spring, specific date and location to be determined, to continue discussions with stakeholders. At the conclusion of this meeting, APHIS will share how it intends to move forward, including the mechanism for doing so. APHIS is developing improved guidance on Initial State Response, and Containment Plans and scheduled for distribution by March 2018.