
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release

Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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Sessions help Cowichan, Comox, Salt Spring poultry owners prevent avian flu

VICTORIA – The Ministry of Agriculture and Food will hold three information sessions Oct. 12-14 for small-flock poultry owners on Salt Spring Island and in the Cowichan and Comox valleys.

The sessions will focus on the avian influenza virus, how they can protect their flocks and how to prepare for potential impacts if their birds become sick.

The sessions will be led by B.C. government veterinary specialists. Attendees will learn about:

- improving flock or farm biosecurity to reinforce against disease outbreaks;
- recognizing the signs of avian influenza and how to report cases;
- how foreign animal disease regulations affect small-flock poultry;
- what to expect if a flock is positive for avian influenza; and
- resources available for non-commercial bird owners, including diagnostic services through the BC Animal Health Centre.

Attendees will receive a free biosecurity kit containing tools and information to help maintain good biosecurity practices.

Although there is no cost to attend the session, seating is limited and registration is mandatory.

Register online:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/bc-ministry-of-agriculture-and-food-52507526703>

The sessions will be at:

- Glenora Community Hall, 3660 Glenora Rd., Duncan, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., on Wednesday, Oct. 12
- Merville Hall, 1245 Fenwick Rd., Merville, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 13
- Lions Club of Salt Spring Island, 103 Bonnet Ave., Salt Spring Island, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fri, Oct. 14

The risk of avian influenza to commercial poultry farms and small flocks increases each spring and fall with the migration of waterfowl and other birds to and through British Columbia.

Quick Facts:

- Avian influenza is a federally regulated disease and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) leads the investigation and response with provincial support for testing, mapping, surveillance and disposal.
- Wild birds have tested positive for H5 strains of avian influenza in multiple regions of the province.

- The Wild Bird Mortality Investigation Program hotline, 1 866 431-2473, accepts public reports of dead wild birds.
- Since mid-April, the CFIA has confirmed 22 cases of avian influenza in commercial and small poultry flocks in communities throughout B.C. This is an extension of an ongoing North American outbreak.

Learn More:

CFIA information about current state of avian influenza in Canada:

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/response-to-detections-of-highly-pathogenic-avian-/eng/1640207916497/1640207916934>

CFIA factsheet about Avian Influenza:

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/fact-sheet/eng/1356193731667/1356193918453#a2>

Ministry of Agriculture and Food information on Avian Influenza including what to be on the lookout for, resources for small flock owners, deputy chief veterinarian orders and information on testing

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/reportable-notifiable-diseases/avian-influenza-ai>

Contact:

Dave Townsend
Media Relations
Ministry of Agriculture and Food
250 356-7098
250 889-5945 (mobile)

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