**Avian Influenza Key Messages**

**Highlight – Talking Points – Highlight**

* **Missouri Situation:** The United States Department of Agriculture leads the on-the-ground response in our state, along with support from the Missouri Department of Agriculture.
  + Every state has experienced avian influenza this fall and winter.
    - In Missouri, that means that since 2022:
      * 35 commercial flocks, 24 backyard flocks
  + Updated data can be found: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections__;!!EErPFA7f--AJOw!FA8-nkquytViugYowqHYhQNGb4Jn-SzBh1GuWUIePTt6AelnLs5ioRnQKBU8nvLIMiOo2jJ6M9RlCsX_2ZErjSvL3ZGgPHD4h74YEA$)
* **Human:** Risk of avian influenza for the general public is low, but people who work with infected animals or their byproducts are at an increased risk.
  + There has been no person-to-person transmission of avian influenza in the United States.
  + Seasonal influenza strains are circulating this time of year as they usually do, but it is not to be confused with avian influenza.
    - Seasonal influenza activity is considered high in Missouri.
    - Nationally, seasonal influenza remains elevated with most states reporting high to very high influenza activity.
    - Data suggests seasonal Influenza A cases are leading this wave of flu illnesses.
* **Pets:** Pets exposed to sick or dead birds infected with avian influenza, or consuming infected milk or other contaminated food items, could also become infected.
  + It is unlikely that humans will get sick from contact with their pets, but it is not possible to completely rule out after a direct exposure to an infected pet.
* **Farm:** Those working on a poultry farm during an avian influenza cleanup response and at a barn with infected animals are at increased risk of avian influenza.
  + Risk of avian influenza to the general public is low.
  + We haven’t had a human case in our county.
  + We haven’t had a human case in individuals working on a farm.
    - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required during a response and minimizes exposure when used properly.
    - Those at risk of exposure are being monitored and offered testing.
  + A farm can become infected when a migratory bird brings avian influenza to their property, even if they do everything right from a biosecurity standpoint.
    - The farms are thoroughly sanitized following a positive avian influenza detection.
    - A positive flock can be very stressful for farmers, mentally and economically.
      * It’s important that community members show support for farmers during these times by respecting their property and minimizing rumors.
  + It is not proven or confirmed at this time that avian influenza is transmitted by wind.
* **Wildlife:** The Missouri Department of Conservation has provided the following recommendations:
  + Do not touch dead geese, waterfowl, or other bird species.
  + Report any sightings of dead geese to MDC online at [http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4KD](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/http:*2F*2Fshort.mdc.mo.gov*2F4KD/1/01000193b0de755d-0ccde53b-2afa-4d3b-932e-b8b24063ecfd-000000/IaGxVQHgy4plelc_0GTVUbycayZtupQwTJK4z2Su28I=383__;JSUl!!EErPFA7f--AJOw!G_yb-AuuJ0G59tQUJiM0TP_SYBH95k5AgFtsPZTDqGrp_IxC2K5uG4JsUc3csuTfZSYZsYyq5bhDjLK1h6QjFXT0Q0jfOpiy1w0PyOKaaXYCgTn7mtw$)
  + Ensure pets do not come into contact with dead animals to help prevent the spread of disease.
  + If you have inadvertently come into contact with a dead goose, wash your hands thoroughly and contact a healthcare professional if you experience any unusual symptoms.
* **Food:** Meat, eggs and dairy products are safe to consume when prepared properly.
  + No one in the United States has gotten avian influenza after eating properly prepared food.
  + To kill bacteria and viruses like avian influenza:
    - Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products.
    - Cooking meat and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 ˚F.
      * Eggs sold in grocery stores are washed and sanitized.
  + As always, prevent cross contamination when cooking and wash hands and utensils regularly.

**Avoid – Talking Points – Avoid**

* Don’t discuss pets unless directly asked to minimize unnecessary fear.
* Don’t discuss H5 being transmitted by wind unless directly asked to minimize unnecessary fear.
* Don’t post on social media without a plan to moderate comments and correct rumors.
* Don’t disclose farm location and owner names.
* Don’t detail bird disposal methods.
* Don’t promote the number of birds affected in your county or per farm.
* Don’t call it “Bird Flu” when possible. Use “Avian Influenza.”