

## Medicine

### Bird flue found in a Georgia commercial flock for the 1<sup>st</sup> time amid the nationwide outbreak

For the first time since the 2022 countrywide outbreak, bird flu hit a poultry producer in Georgia, the nation's top state for chicken production. The state Department of Agriculture announced Friday that the agency has detected a case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza at a commercial poultry producer in Elbert County, approximately 100 miles (165 kilometers) northeast of Atlanta. The agency suspended all poultry exhibitions, shows, swaps, meets and sales. The virus has been detected four times in Georgia, but only in backyard flocks previously, including among 13 chickens and ducks earlier this month in Clayton County south of Atlanta. “This is a serious threat to Georgia’s #1 industry and the livelihoods of thousands of Georgians who make their living in our state’s poultry industry,” Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper said in a news release.

The producer first noticed clinical signs of bird flu Wednesday at the Elbert County location, according to the release. The Georgia Poultry Laboratory Network confirmed a positive virus detection Thursday afternoon, which the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory also confirmed Friday. The site had about 45,000 broiler breeders when bird flu was detected.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture's Emergency Management sent its State Agricultural Response Teams on Friday to the site to “conduct depopulation, cleaning and disinfecting, and disposal operations.”

All commercial poultry operations within a 6.2-mile (10-kilometer) radius were put under quarantine and will undergo at least two weeks of surveillance testing.

Georgia Poultry Federation president Mike Giles said in a statement Saturday that it is cooperating with state and federal officials and there are already testing processes in place to make sure all chicken products sold for consumption are safe to eat, local outlets reported. The federation represents producers in the state.

“That approach to protecting the safety of poultry products produced in Georgia will continue throughout this response and beyond” Giles said.

A spokesperson for the Georgia Department of Agriculture said it does not provide the name of an affected site when an animal disease breaks out to prevent any unauthorized access to the operation that could trigger a wider spread of the disease and to protect the farmer from harassment.

Bird flu has been spreading, killing millions of wild and domestic birds worldwide over the last two years, among other animals.