

**Animal Disease Outbreak: Virulent Newcastle Disease Regional Quarantine Affecting Bird Owners
2.27.2019**

Dear colleagues,

The Veterinary Public Health (VPH) Program was notified by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) that the State Veterinarian has imposed a regional quarantine on all poultry, poultry products, associated poultry material and non-poultry species to prevent the ongoing spread of Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND). The quarantine mandates the reporting of sick birds and prohibits poultry owners from moving birds in all of Los Angeles County and in large areas of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

VND, a highly contagious, severe disease in poultry, has been found in backyard, commercial and small poultry businesses in Southern California, including Los Angeles County, since May 2018. All birds can be infected with VND, although some may not get sick, instead spreading the disease to poultry and other pet birds. The disease is spread by direct contact between birds, by nasal and eye secretions, and through feces. People can spread VND by moving infected birds, contaminated equipment and feed, and by wearing clothing and shoes that have been in infected areas.

Clinical signs in birds are typically rapid in onset and include: coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, green watery diarrhea, reduction in egg production, twisting of the head and neck, paralysis, circling, muscle tremors, depression, swelling around eyes and neck, and sudden death. VND is NOT a food safety concern. Properly cooked meat and eggs from infected birds are safe to eat. In rare cases, people in very close contact with infected birds may present with a mild fever, and redness and swelling in the area around the eyes. These symptoms often go away without medical treatment.

What do bird owners have to do in Los Angeles County?

1. Report:

- a) All bird owners shall immediately report any clinical signs suggestive of VND to the Sick Bird Hotline (866-922-2473).
- b) All commercial/independent/small poultry businesses shall immediately report any clinical signs suggestive of VND and any significant changes to their health and/or production monitoring records as required by CDFA.

2. Test:

- a) All bird owners shall allow diagnostic testing of their birds for VND.
- b) All commercial/independent/small poultry businesses shall test their poultry for VND

as required by CDFA.

3. Isolate:

- a) All poultry must be isolated from all non-poultry species.
- b) All poultry must be confined to premises in a pen, cage or some other means that prevents poultry from moving off the premises.
- c) No poultry can move off a premises without prior written permission from CDFA.
- d) All commercial/independent/small poultry businesses must receive prior written permission from the CDFA before movements into, within, or out of this region of poultry, poultry products, poultry associated materials or other items that could spread VND (due to contact with poultry, poultry products or poultry associated materials).
- e) No movement of any non-poultry species from premises that also house poultry without prior written permission from CDFA.

4. Cease:

- a) No exhibitions of poultry (including racing pigeons) or non-poultry species without prior written permission from CDFA.
- b) No live poultry shall leave any live bird market, pet store, feed store or other retail establishment without prior written permission from CDFA.
- c) No shipping, transporting, or receiving live poultry or poultry hatching eggs out of or into this regional quarantine area without prior written permission from CDFA. This includes shipments via the United States Postal Service, private package shipping companies or similar methods.

5. Enhance Biosecurity:

- a) All commercial/independent/small poultry businesses shall enhance their biosecurity as required by CDFA.
- b) All retail establishments selling poultry feed shall enhance their biosecurity as required by CDFA.

Veterinary practices play a critical role in protecting public health by preventing diseases, diagnosing and treating illness in animals and by educating pet owners. We appreciate your assistance with informing bird owners of these new requirements. If you have questions, you may call our program and speak with a Public Health Veterinarian at 213-288-7060 (Mon – Fri, 8AM–5PM) or email us at vet@ph.lacounty.gov, or CDFA about movement restrictions, biosecurity and testing requirements at 866-922-2473 or SFSPermits@cdfa.ca.gov

Sincerely,

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