INDIANA STATE BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Direct all media inquiries, including interview requests, to the Indiana Joint Information Center (JIC) at: 317-238-1784 or email: jic@jic.in.gov
General updates are available online at: www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indiana Clarifies Avian Flu Findings in Nine Flocks

INDIANAPOLIS (17 Jan. 2016)--Laboratory testing of samples from eight of nine Southern Indiana turkey flocks was completed overnight by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa. While all nine were announced as H7 influenza-positive yesterday, the specific strain was yet to be determined. The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has been informed eight are **low-pathogenic H7N8**. Testing continues on the remaining sample.

Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk; poultry and eggs are safe to eat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk of illness to humans to be very low.

Indiana State Veterinarian Bret D. Marsh, DVM calls this good news, and evidence that Indiana's aggressive surveillance and response efforts in Dubois County are working.

"The low-path H7N8 virus was identified during testing in the 10-km zone around the initial flu-positive flock," Dr. Marsh said. "Because flu viruses are constantly mutating, we want to catch any case as early as possible after infection. We know this virus strain can intensify, so finding these cases as low-path strains shows we are keeping pace with the spread of this disease in the area."

In addition to the HxNx naming scheme for specific strains, AI viruses are further classified by their pathogenicity—the ability of a particular virus strain to produce disease in domestic chickens. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus strains are extremely infectious, often fatal to domestic poultry, and can spread rapidly from flock to flock. Low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI) virus strains occur naturally in wild migratory waterfowl and shorebirds without causing illness. LPAI viruses have the potential to mutate into HPAI.

"This finding does not alter the aggressive control strategy BOAH has set forth," added Dr. Marsh. "Nor does it change our resolve to eliminate this virus wherever we find it."

Priority response by the state of Indiana and USDA continues on all the infected farms. Turkeys are being humanely euthanized on infected sites within 24 hours of diagnosis. Depopulation eliminates the

source of infection to prevent the disease from spreading. Disposal of the turkeys, primarily via indoor composting, will be followed by thorough cleaning and disinfection of all barns.

Aggressive testing of other poultry farms in the area continues. During the last 24 hours, commercial farms have yielded 100 negative flu tests, beyond the nine new positives. In addition, state and federal teams have visited 503 residences in the area to identify any small flocks for testing. Tests are pending on 17 small flocks. Residential visits will continue in the 10-km area.

About Indiana Poultry:
Dubois County is Indiana's largest turkey-producing county, growing 1.4 million birds annually. The state ranks fourth in the nation in turkey production. As a major supplier of eggs, ducks and chickens, too, Indiana's poultry industry generates $2.4 billion and employs 14,000 Hoosiers.

UPDATES and INFORMATION:
Situation updates and status reports about ongoing avian influenza response activities, along with critical disease-related information, will be posted online at: www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm . Users may subscribe to email updates on a link at that page.

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