Please note: These may be revised as the situation continues to change.

USDA APHIS will work to achieve these goals for critical activities in a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) response.

Etiology and Ecology

- Provide Unified Incident Command (IC) and stakeholders a common set of etiology and ecology definitions and descriptions.
- Ensure responders have an understanding of HPAI when establishing or revising goals, objectives, strategies, and procedures.

Case Definitions and Laboratory Definitions

- Update case definitions at regular intervals and as needed throughout incident or outbreak.
- Review existing case definitions within 24 hours of the first presumptive or confirmed positive case (index case).

Surveillance

- Implement a surveillance plan within 48 hours of the confirmation of an outbreak.
- Implement a surveillance plan that will (1) define the present extent of HPAI and (2) detect unknown Infected Premises (IP) quickly.
- Consider susceptible wildlife populations in the surveillance plan; coordinate with APHIS Wildlife Services, the Department of Interior, State wildlife agencies, and State agriculture departments to perform appropriate surveillance in wildlife populations.
- Provide complete surveillance data summaries and analyses at intervals specified by IC.

Diagnostics

- Provide clear direction to responders on sample collection and processing procedures, if modification from routine standards is required.
- Meet the surge requirements for diagnostic testing at specific intervals, starting at time zero and at 24-hour intervals as the response escalates.
- Report all diagnostic test results to appropriate personnel and information management systems as soon as possible, and within 4 hours of diagnostic test completion.

- Support diagnostic testing requirements for continuity of business plans through rapid sample testing and reporting.
- Integrate surveillance plan requirements with current diagnostic sample collection, sample testing, surge capacity, and reporting capabilities.

Epidemiological Investigation and Tracing

- Assign a premises designation and priority of investigation within 6 hours of identifying a potential IP or Contact Premises (CP) through tracing activities.
- Identify all CP within 24 hours of identifying the IP or the initial CP.
- Enter tracing information into Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) in 24-hour intervals or less.
- Determine within 96 hours of identifying the index case, the nature of the HPAI outbreak, identify the risk factors for transmission, and develop mitigation strategies.
- Collect trace-back and trace-forward information for at least 14–21 days before the appearance of clinical signs in HPAI infected poultry.
- Analyze epidemiological data at routine intervals so that information gathered can apply to response activities (and future preparedness) to rapidly and effectively contain, control, and eradicate HPAI.

Information Management

- Perform EMRS data entry processes or information downloads in 12-hour intervals or less. Data entry should be as close to real-time as feasible.
- Ensure data is entered in both a timely and consistent manner across widespread field operations.
- Centralize some or all data-entry capabilities, to the extent indicated by the situation, if rapid reporting up the chain of command is required and field resources are stretched.
- Report incident goals and objectives, progress, tracing information, premises status information, diagnostic results, epidemiology reports, permits for movement, and resource information in a timely and accurate manner both internally and externally.

Communication

- Brief the media, public, industry, Congress, trading partners, and others on the HPAI outbreak status and the actions being taken to control and eradicate the disease.

- Highlight the importance of sound biosecurity practices and steps that producers and owners can take to protect their own flocks against HPAI infection.
- Coordinate with Federal, State and local agencies, Tribal entities, producer groups, and Land Grant University-based Cooperative Extension Services to ensure a consistent messaging regarding animal health, public health, and food safety.
- Assure consumers that USDA is working on HPAI poultry health concerns, in an informed and timely manner.
- Assure the public that USDA is cooperating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on real and perceived threats of zoonotic disease.

Health and Safety and Personal Protective Equipment

- Provide daily pre-entry safety briefings for all response personnel.
- Prevent, to every extent possible, adverse human health events related to emergency response efforts.
- Consider the psychological effects of a response effort on personnel; provide resources and direction for support.
- Encourage potential responders to receive the current season's inactivated influenza virus vaccine prior to deployment.

Biosecurity

- Implement biosecurity measures as quickly and effectively as possible with suspect or presumptive positive cases.
- Contain the virus to IP through biocontainment measures, including (but not limited to) rapid depopulation, disposal, and decontamination (virus elimination) activities.
- Prevent the introduction of HPAI to non-infected premises through bioexclusion measures, including stringent biosecurity practices for all fomites and personnel moving on to a poultry premises.

Quarantine and Movement Control

- Through a State-Federal IC, coordinate the establishment of an Infected Zone (IZ) and a Buffer Zone (BZ) (a Control Area [CA]) within 6 hours of identifying the index case.
- Implement effective quarantine and movement controls as rapidly as possible once a CA (IZ plus BZ) is established.
- Ensure quarantine and movement controls consider competing priorities: weigh the risk of disease transmission against the need for critical movements (e.g., feed trucks) and business continuity.

Continuity of Business

- Implement continuity of business plans (the Secure Food Supply Plans) when a CA is established.
- Work with industry and IC to facilitate and permit movement of non-infected poultry and non-contaminated poultry products throughout the outbreak.
- Enter permits and movements in EMRS 2.0 in a timely fashion, in at least 24-hour intervals.

Regionalization for International Trade

- Initiate the implementation of regionalization plans tailored to HPAI and the epidemiological situation as soon as possible during the outbreak response.
- Provide trading partners and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) relevant outbreak information to support the regionalization plan, including measures used to provide evidence of disease-freedom in the region.

Mass Depopulation and Euthanasia

- Provide humane treatment (e.g., food, water, etc.) at all times until birds are euthanized or depopulated.
- Depopulate infected poultry in the quickest, safest, most humane way possible within 24 hours of a presumptive positive classification.
- APHIS works with State officials to immediately identify whether poultry on CP or those meeting the suspect case definition also require depopulation.
- Use carbon dioxide and water-based foam as primary depopulation methods; if the depopulation goal (within 24 hours) cannot be met, consider alternative methods for depopulation to prevent virus transmission and amplification.
- Incorporate excellent biosecurity practices for all depopulation activities to control HPAI virus and prevent continued spread of HPAI.
- Minimize, to the extent possible, the emotional and psychological impact on animal owners, caretakers, and their families, and those involved in the actual depopulation activities.

Disposal

- Begin disposal as soon as possible after flock depopulation.
- Properly dispose of contaminated and potentially contaminated materials, including poultry carcasses, while maximizing pathogen containment, environmental sustainability, stakeholder acceptance, and cost effectiveness.

- Ensure disposal activities are conducted by an individual with subject matter expertise and knowledge on biocontainment.

Cleaning and Disinfection (Virus Elimination)

- Remove, inactivate, reduce, or destroy HPAI virus on IP.
- Conduct virus elimination activities in the most cost effective manner possible.
- Choose appropriate virus elimination methods, based on the characteristics of the premises/houses, temperature, and other relevant factors.
- Conduct timely and effective initial cleaning and disinfection on all areas of the premises that do not have contaminated material (this includes vehicles and equipment), prior to final virus elimination activities on the entire premises.
- Conduct final virus elimination procedures in a timely manner.

Vaccination

- Immediately, and at intervals throughout the HPAI outbreak, evaluate whether using an emergency vaccination strategy is appropriate.
- Communicate with stakeholders about the availability and known effectiveness of HPAI vaccines against currently circulating field strains.
- Order the resources to implement the emergency vaccination strategy as rapidly as possible if a decision is made to use an emergency vaccination strategy.
- Engage in a public awareness campaign to provide information and education regarding the use of emergency vaccination for the HPAI outbreak.

Logistics

- Deploy personnel, as requested, to the incident site for response activities within 24 hours.
- Deliver requested materials to the incident site, appropriate to the response, within 24 hours of an outbreak.
- Provide emergency contracting support as needed for activities including equipment transport, cold-chain storage, and 3D activities (depopulation, disposal, and disinfection).
- Monitor locations and status of all deployed equipment and personnel contracted through emergency contracting.

Wildlife Management and Vector Control

- Develop a wildlife management plan that addresses transmission of HPAI in wild birds as soon as possible after identification of the index case in domestic poultry.

- Conduct an assessment of the risk that wildlife poses for further transmission of HPAI to susceptible birds, poultry, and other animals within 7 days of confirmation of the index case.
- Integrate wildlife management and vector control authorities and personnel into the IC as required by the situation.
- Prevent mechanical transmission of HPAI to poultry via mice, vultures, and other vectors by restricting contact with infected flocks or infected material through appropriate biosecurity measures.
- Prevent contamination of food and water sources by wild birds and their secretions.

Animal Welfare

- Provide humane treatment during the HPAI outbreak, especially from the time animals are identified for depopulation or vaccination activities until they are depopulated, as prescribed by veterinary authorities of affected States or Tribal Nations.

Modeling and Assessment Tools

- Provide scientifically supported modeling products and qualitative or quantitative risk assessments to address issues of concern within 72 hours after a request from the Unified IC and/or Incident Coordinator (or designee).
- Use models and assessment tools in after action reports and/or lessons learned documents to analyze incident response as needed.

Appraisal and Compensation

- Collect all relevant information required for indemnity as soon as an HPAI investigation is initiated, a HPAI presumptive positive case is identified, or an HPAI suspect case is identified (whichever is earliest).
- Make every attempt to provide an accurate fair market appraisal to owners and flock managers prior to depopulation; however, in emergency situations, signed appraisals are not required prior to depopulation if there is immediate risk of virus spread or amplification of the virus on a presumptive or confirmed positive premises.
- Calculate and process indemnity payments with speed and accuracy.
- Communicate rapidly between the producer, company, State officials, APHIS, and laboratory officials.

FINANCE

- Rapidly request funds through appropriate funding mechanisms.
- Rapidly provide general and detailed budget information as anticipated and requested.
- Provide timely finance and administration functions within the Incident Command System structure.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- Stand-up an Incident Coordination Group (ICG) as quickly as possible—typically within the first 24 hours after the detection of HPAI in the United States, or as required by the specific incident.
- Evaluate, with State partners, the need for full or partial Incident Management Team(s), and deploy as needed—typically within 24–48 hours after the detection of HPAI in the United States.
- Establish a Unified State-Federal IC that communicates effectively with all responders in the field and the ICG.