



Agriculture Newsletter
Fall 2015



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**Highly Pathogenic
Avian Influenza**

Pennsylvania poultry farmers are advised to prepare for the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), a disease predominately spread by migratory birds, as it has the potential to reach the state this fall through the upcoming spring.

To date, the U.S. has experienced a 10% loss of egg-laying hens due to HPAI. Iowa, the #1 egg-producing state, has lost more than 33 million birds and has requested a presidential disaster declaration as losses are estimated over \$1 billion. One of the latest cases of HPAI was confirmed in Michigan.

Note: The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has deemed these particular strains of HPAI to be a low risk to humans.

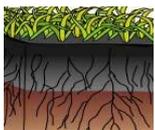
Signs of HPAI include the following:

- Sudden death
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Reduced egg production
- Soft-shelled/deformed eggs
- Swelling/purple color of head/eyelids, comb/hocks
- Sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge
- Diarrhea



If your flock is experiencing symptoms of HPAI, call the USDA Healthy Birds Hotline at 1-866-536-7593.

To prepare for a potential outbreak, poultry producers are strongly encouraged to develop a flock plan and continue to follow proper biosecurity procedures. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (www.agriculture.pa.gov) contains a wealth of information regarding HPAI; including a generic flock plan to follow in the event of an outbreak, detailed biosecurity procedures, and the latest information on avian influenza.



Soil Sampling Guidelines

Soil testing is an integral component of sound nutrient management. Poor soil sampling techniques can greatly impact the validity of your soil test results. Listed below are several guidelines to follow when taking samples. New soil tests should be taken at least once every three years.

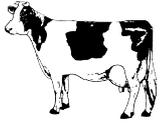
- Plan ahead. Take samples in the summer or fall to allow plenty of time for nutrient management planning.
- To get a representative sample of the entire field, cores should be taken from no fewer than 15-20 places randomly throughout the field. Samples should be representing no more than 10-20 acres.
- Take cores between rows. Do not take cores in uncharacteristic areas of the

field (i.e. fence row, animal congregation area).

- If an area is problematic and can be treated separately, take a separate sample for that area.
- Take cores to plow depth in cultivated fields.
- Take cores 3-4" deep in permanent pastures.
- Obtain 2 samples for no-till fields: take cores to 6" deep for fertilizer & lime recommendations, and take cores to 2" deep to examine soil surface acidity.
- Use a clean container to collect samples.
- Mix the 15-20 core samples in the clean container, extract any roots, stones, or critters, and air-dry the sample.
- Be sure to fill (approximately 1 cup) and label the mailing pouch, and complete the information sheet.

If you'd like assistance with soil sampling, and/or need soil test kits, please contact the district. More information on soil sampling can be found on the Penn State Extension's website, at extension.psu.edu.





Hoof Health Workshop

When: Friday, October 30, 2015
9:00 am – 3:30pm

Where: Home Made Restaurant,
5820 Route 119 North, Home, PA 15747
*Note: The hands-on portion will be held at
Pollock Dairy, 3704 Pollock Road, Marion Center,
PA 15759.*

This workshop will provide useful knowledge and teach practical skills to help dairy owners, managers, and employees improve the hoof health of their cattle, and increase their economic returns. A special emphasis will be placed on the important role of nutrition in maintaining healthy hooves.

Lameness is a very common and costly condition in dairy cattle which has significant effects on the health and well-being of the animal. Although farmers may work closely with a hoof trimmer and vet, they should still have an understanding of how lameness in dairy cattle can be identified, treated, and prevented.

Participants will receive hands-on instruction and practice in the art of foot trimming and treating lame cows, as well as how to practically analyze different aspects of a farm's nutritional program. Cost is \$25.00 to attend, and includes lunch.

Register by October 27th by contacting Penn State Extension Registration Support at 1-877-489-1398, or online at <http://extension.psu.edu/events>



Farm\$en\$e

When: November 3, 10, 17, 24, 2015
10:00am – 3:00pm

Where: Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator,
165 Elm Street, Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Farm\$en\$e is a four session workshop that teaches farmers how to understand financial statements such as the cash flow statement, the balance sheet, and the income statement. Course participants will learn how to use financial records to make informed financial and production decisions. These skills will strengthen the farm business and improve relationships with business partners.

Registration cost:

- \$225/ farm, limited to two individuals per farm
- Additional person (beyond two) \$90/person
- \$6.25 for record keeping tools (either paper or electronic) One set per farm.
- Cost of registration includes one textbook, one set of records (either electronic or paper) and lunch for all sessions.

Register by Oct. 21st by contacting Penn State Extension Registration Support at 814-563-9388 or online at <http://extension.psu.edu/events>