

**TESTING IN THE CONTROLLED ZONE FOR BIRDS  
DESTINED FOR SLAUGHTER OR LIVE BIRD MARKETS WITHIN 6 WEEKS  
(Broilers, Spent Hens, etc.)**

The option of leaving dead birds at the end of the farm lane for swabbing by authorized personnel may be offered as an alternative to in-house collection and submission of swabs.

**Surveillance AI Testing Requirements for  
Birds 3 weeks of Age or Older within the Controlled Zone**

**Within the Isolation Zone** (generally 2 miles around an Infected Premises):

- initial virus detection testing of tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs within the 2mile zone will be continued
- Initial swab samples from birds within the 2mile zone must be submitted within 48 hours after the quarantine is placed.
- Collect tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs from 15 fresh dead birds and submit the swabs to a laboratory designated by DAG or USDA\*. If you do not have 15 dead birds, take swab samples from any dead or sick birds first, and then swab other birds to collect 15 swabs.\*\*
- If there are fewer than 15 birds in the flock, collect samples from all birds.
- Refer to the guidelines for collection and submission of samples included in this document.
- Continue collection and submission of tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs every 7 days.
- Samples will be collected until the Department of Agriculture announces that the risk period has passed.

**Within the Surveillance Zone** (as defined by the Quarantine Order):

- Initial virus detection testing of tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs within the heightened surveillance zone will be continued.
- Initial swab samples from birds within the heightened surveillance zone must be submitted within 72 hours after the quarantine is placed.
- Collect tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs for virus detection testing from fifteen (15) fresh dead birds\*. If you do not have 15 dead birds, take swab samples from any dead or sick birds first, and then swab other birds to collect 15 swabs.\*\*
- If there are fewer than 15 birds in the flock, collect samples from all birds.
- Refer to the guidelines for collection and submission of samples included in this document.
- Continue collection and submission of tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs every 7 days.
- Samples will be collected until the Department of Agriculture announces that the risk period has passed.

## **Guidelines for Collection and Submission of Samples**

*Please Note:* In collecting and submitting samples, identify the Premises precisely. All submission forms should include a Premises ID Number. If you do not know the number, request one from the RI DEM Division of Agriculture (DAG at 401-222-2781). If a Premises ID number is unavailable, on all submission forms record the street address where the samples were taken. (Note: That address may differ from the grower's mailing address.)

### **Collection of Samples**

#### **TRACHEAL SWABS:**

- Collect tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs for virus detection testing from fifteen birds representative of the flock. Take swab samples from any dead or sick birds first, and then swab other birds to collect 15 swabs.
- If there are fewer than 15 birds in the flock, collect samples from all birds.
- Use dry swabs for dead bird sample collection; use dry swabs or swabs moistened with VTM for live bird sample collection.
- Insert the swab and rub the mucosa vigorously.
- Use 1 swab for each bird.
- Place swabs into tubes containing enough VTM to moisten and cover the swabs.
- Place 11 swabs (from 11 different birds) into one tube.
- Submit tubes to a DAG- or USDA-designated laboratory.
- Write the farm name and Premise ID on the side of the box of samples (not on the lid).
- Submit a completed submission form which includes a Premise ID.

#### **CLOACAL SWABS\*\*:**

- Collect cloacal swabs for virus detection testing from fifteen birds representative of the flock. Take swab samples from any dead or sick birds first, and then swab other birds to collect 15 swabs.
- If there are fewer than 15 birds in the flock, collect samples from all birds.
- Use dry swabs for dead bird sample collection; use dry swabs or swabs moistened with VTM for live bird sample collection.
- Insert the swab and rub the mucosa vigorously.
- Use 1 swab for each bird.
- Place swabs into tubes containing enough VTM to moisten and cover the swabs.
- Place 11 swabs (from 11 different birds) into one tube.
- Submit tubes to a DAG- or USDA-designated laboratory.
- Write the farm name and the Premise ID on the bottom of the box of samples (not on the lid).
- Submit a completed submission form which includes a Premise ID.

\* All samples must be taken by government authorized personnel (DAG, USDA, or their designated laboratory personnel). If a foreign animal disease (a reportable FAD, such as HPAI) is suspected, sampling can only be conducted by a certified FADD (Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician) or an authorized representative. Prior notification of USDA or DAG is required.

\*\*Waterfowl: Cloacal swabs required

## **SUBMISSION OF SAMPLES TO A LABORATORY**

- Samples can be tested only at a USDA- or DAG-designated laboratory, normally the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (CVMDL) at the University of Connecticut. In accordance with USDA / APHIS NVS protocols, confirmatory testing/subtyping will normally be done at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa
- Call the laboratory in advance to These let them know when the samples will arrive:
  - Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
  - University of Connecticut , 61 N. Eagleville Rd., Storrs, CT 06269
  - Phone 860-486-0837; Fax 860-486-3738
- When leaving dead birds at the end of the farm lane for swabbing, place birds in a sturdy, leak-proof container. Authorized personnel will normally collect swab samples and leave the dead birds at that site for disposal.
- To ensure the integrity of swab samples:
  - VTM should be an orange color when fresh. Check that the VTM has not changed to a violet color and has not passed the date of expiration.
  - VTM should be refrigerated at all times.
  - Keep the swabs in VTM on fresh ice packs until transporting to a DAG-designated laboratory (you may need to change ice packs at least every 24 hours).
  - If samples are stored in a freezer for more than 72 hours, place a plastic bag around each box and seal to prevent drying of the VTM.
  - Place a completed copy of an AI Sample Submission Form in each box with the corresponding samples and a Premises ID.

## **Reporting**

Report any signs suggestive of AI in the flock immediately to the RI DEM Division of Agriculture at: (401) 222-2781.

Signs suggestive of AI include the following:

- Increased mortality;
- Decreased egg production;
- Swollen eyelids/sinuses/combs or wattles;
- Purple or bluish discoloration of wattles and combs;
- Respiratory snicking; and
- Generally depressed birds.

These are general guidelines only.

Commonly, the producer will notice mortality increases and, in the case of layers, decreased egg production, which usually trails the mortality by several days.

The RI DEM Division of Agriculture reserves the right to amend the above mentioned requirements for Avian Influenza with the goal of any changes still being to prevent, contain and eliminate the disease. Changes to the general guidelines of the protocol may result from information including, but not limited to, virus strain, pathogenicity, morbidity and mortality, movement of birds and products, and additional epidemiological information obtained as a result of avian influenza investigations.