

AVIAN INFLUENZA IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

*As of September 2025



What is Avian Influenza?

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), also known as bird flu, is a viral disease that affects domestic poultry such as chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. It poses a major threat to poultry production due to its potential to cause severe illness and high mortality rates in flocks. The virus spreads through direct contact with infected birds, their droppings, feed, water, equipment, and even people.

How has this impacted supply chains?

1. Mass Culling and Supply Shortages

- Over 157 million birds have been culled across all 50 U.S. states and Puerto Rico due to Avian Influenza outbreaks, including egg-laying hens, broilers, turkeys, and ducks.
- The detection of a single infected bird often leads to the depopulation of entire flocks, as it is a USDA-mandated control measure.
- This has led to egg shortages, with some grocery stores limiting purchases and restaurants adding surcharges to egg-based meals.

2. Price Inflation

- Egg prices have nearly doubled, reaching around \$5.90 per dozen in early 2025.
- Chicken and turkey prices have also risen, though broiler chickens have been less affected due to frozen stockpiles.
- The cost of poultry products is expected to remain high due to ongoing outbreaks and the time required to rebuild flocks.

3. Trade Disruptions

- Several countries, including the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Singapore, have imposed import bans on U.S. poultry products.
- These restrictions have led to export losses estimated at \$34 million initially, with more expected as outbreaks continue.

4. Operational and Financial Strain

- Farmers face emotional and financial hardship from repeated culling and the cost of rebuilding flocks.
- The U.S. government has spent over \$1.4 billion to compensate for losses.
- Producers are also dealing with rising feed and energy costs, and infrastructure investments required by new cage-free regulations.

5. Broader Industry Effects

- The outbreak has affected dairy cattle in 17 states, leading to reduced milk production and economic losses.
- Industries that rely on egg-based ingredients—like bakeries, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals—are also experiencing disruptions.



Why is this important?

Avian influenza threatens not only commercial supply chains but also Tribal food systems, economies, and cultural practices. Many Tribal producers rely on poultry for local food access and income, making outbreaks especially disruptive. Rural and remote locations can also make it harder to access replacement birds, veterinary care, or emergency resources. Understanding these impacts helps Tribal producers plan ahead, protect flocks, and push for equitable support.

Actions for Tribal Producers

- **Strengthen biosecurity**
 - Limit outside contact with flocks, isolate new birds, and keep feed and water covered to prevent contamination from wild birds.
- **Monitor and report**
 - Watch for signs of illness and report sick or dying birds to Tribal, state, or federal animal health officials to reduce spread and access support.
- **Build local resilience**
 - Collaborate with other Tribal producers to share resources, strengthen local food systems, and reduce reliance on national supply chains.
- **Diversify operations**
 - Incorporate other livestock, crops, or value-added products to reduce dependency on poultry income.
- **Access support and training**
 - Connect with Extension programs and USDA resources.
- **Advocate for Tribal needs**
 - Engage in policy discussions to ensure Tribal producers receive equitable support during disease outbreaks.