

News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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CALIFORNIA FREE OF VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE



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Southern California Regional Quarantine Lifted

Español

SACRAMENTO, June 1, 2020 – The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have announced an end to the Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND) quarantine in Southern California. Extensive testing of the regulated area has been completed, with no additional detections of the disease. This allows poultry to again move freely within California.

“We have eagerly anticipated this day and are extremely proud of the tireless work of the Virulent Newcastle Disease Task Force,” said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. “While we extend gratitude to the hundreds of dedicated and skilled USDA, CDFA and California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System employees who worked for over two years to achieve this goal, often in adverse conditions, we also want to thank the thousands of poultry owners in Southern California who made the sacrifices and investments needed to eradicate this virus from California.”

VND was first detected in May of 2018 in Los Angeles County. By December 2018 the virus had spread extensively in backyard poultry in the LA Basin and also infected commercial flocks. After prolonged disease control efforts, the last confirmed positive case was detected in February, 2020. Testing has continued throughout the area since that time to gain assurance that the disease was eradicated.

To continue to protect California flocks, poultry entering California must either have a certificate of veterinary inspection demonstrating good health or a National Poultry Improvement Program certificate. CDFA retains the authority to monitor and test poultry so that any future infections can be stopped quickly, minimizing potential harm. Additionally, CDFA and USDA, in partnership with many bird enthusiasts in Southern California, are committed to on-going monitoring for disease and continual support for biosecurity training.

All backyard poultry owners and commercial operations are encouraged to practice biosecurity measures to help prevent the introduction of disease when people enter or depart the premises, to routinely check birds for signs of illness, and to report any incidence of suspected VND or other bird diseases. More information is available at www.cdfa.ca.gov or through the California Avian Health Education Network (CAHEN) at (866) 922-2473.

California State Veterinarian Dr Annette Jones: “We hope to continue working with bird-owning communities to prevent a reintroduction of widespread disease, so that we never have to place an areawide VND quarantine in Southern California again.”

Background: Virulent Newcastle disease is a virus that affects birds with particularly lethal effects on poultry, affecting the digestive system, nervous system and respiratory system. It is not normally found in the United States. It spreads quickly between birds but is not considered a human health threat. Its presence can be so detrimental to poultry health and the food supply that it triggers state, federal and international regulatory response. While this virus has been introduced and eradicated from more than 15 U.S. states since 1950, the largest outbreaks occurred in California in 1971-1974 and 2002-2003 following a similar pattern but with wider spread than the recent 2018-2020 outbreak.