



HPAI Vaccines and Egg-Laying Hens: What You Need to Know

The egg industry is dealing with an unprecedented outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), also known as bird flu. This outbreak began in 2022 and now is in its fourth year, and it has resulted in the loss of more than 125 million egg laying hens. Further, HPAI has shown its ability to evolve and spread, extending beyond birds into dairy cattle and domestic animals, as well new risks to human health.¹

Despite the best efforts of egg farmers and animal health experts to control and stop the disease, the virality and duration of this outbreak are unprecedented. U.S. egg farms have stringent and comprehensive biosecurity—but it’s not foolproof, as this virus has demonstrated.

Egg producers need expanded research and funding to better understand how this disease is spreading and why it remains so resilient.

HPAI Vaccination Likely Benefits A strategy that includes egg laying-hen vaccinations would:	HPAI Vaccination Potential Challenges A vaccination strategy must address these potential challenges:
• Raise the overall threshold for which HPAI productive infection occurs, meaning less virus circulation within commercial poultry flocks²; • Reduce shedding of the virus, which in turn would help prevent additional spread to other farms and wild animals³; • Decrease the risk of overall human exposure to HPAI⁴; and • Lower the potential for economic losses due to an HPAI outbreak.⁵	• Trade is the single biggest impediment to using vaccines as a tool to stop the disease. U.S. trading partners are concerned vaccinated flocks could harbor the virus, leading to significant disruptions in their own markets.⁶ • In a vaccinated flock, infections with minimal or no symptoms will be harder to identify through passive surveillance, which is why HPAI vaccination must be paired with active and scaled surveillance methods and testing.⁶

Summary

Vaccination is not a replacement for biosecurity protocols or other disease prevention measures, but it has the potential to be a strategy that complements other practices to protect U.S. flocks.

The success of a vaccination strategy requires collaborative leadership by all stakeholders and egg farmers are committed to beating this virus. They're throwing everything they have at it, but they need new tools and more research to better understand and fight this disease.

The AEB remains committed to supporting America's egg farmers through our research, education, and marketing role as they rethink approaches, expand what is known about this disease, and identify new methods and a comprehensive response for eliminating the threat.



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