

AMERICAN RACING PIGEON UNION, INC.

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Avian Influenza Update

We have attempted to keep members apprised of events developing in the states within the Mississippi Flyway where Avian Influenza is present and in neighboring states of the Flyway. Events are changing and the state veterinarians are posting updates frequently. Some are not as forthcoming with information.

In the past, the AU has worked with USDA and studies have been conducted that illustrate pigeons are not susceptible to Avian Influenza. We do not suggest pigeons are defined as poultry. They are not. However, the state vets have the authority to implement protocol they deem necessary to protect their poultry industry.

To date, over 48 million chickens and turkeys have been destroyed and 30 countries will not allow our poultry products, which is devastating to the poultry industry.

States within the Mississippi Flyway are [Alabama](#), [Arkansas](#), [Indiana](#), [Illinois](#), [Iowa](#), [Kentucky](#), [Louisiana](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Mississippi](#), [Missouri](#), [Ohio](#), [Tennessee](#), [Wisconsin](#), and the Canadian provinces of [Saskatchewan](#), [Manitoba](#) and [Ontario](#).

NEW INFORMATION

[Georgia](#) (follow link for press release) AI was found in chickens as of June 9. We will report if any regulations are imposed that may affect homing pigeons.

Some states outside the Flyway are also taking precautionary measures.

[New York](#) (follow link for press release) has stopped all fair and youth show competitions to safeguard against Avian Flu.

[South Carolina](#) (follow link for press release) recommends no co-mingling of birds as

precaution. No outbreak has been found yet.

Though not in the Flyway, we understand they are allowing movement in [Kansas](#). **We are waiting for a more definitive response from the Kansas State Veterinarian regarding movement specific to racing homing pigeons.**

[Minnesota](#) (follow link for press release) has cancelled all bird exhibitions through the end of 2015. They are disallowing gatherings where birds are co-mingled. **An addition to the May 15 release includes: The directive also includes events involving pigeons, including but not limited to: racing homer pigeon events, flying rollers/tumblers, any release of pigeons and any performance birds for competition.**

The state of [Michigan](#) Department of Agriculture has announced a confirmed case of Avian Influenza detected in geese. They had a precautionary ban on shows and events where birds were co-mingled with other birds in an effort to prevent the virus from infecting Michigan flocks. Similar to [Ohio](#), individual members may train their birds within the state. We are told birds should not be basketed together for training, rather individually.

The state vet in [Iowa](#) has indicated they also have a ban on shows, and other events where birds are co-mingled with other birds. We have been advised that birds can be transported through Iowa as long as any required health certificates and permits are in place. Birds may not be released in Iowa.

In [Illinois](#), there have been no cases detected, they indicate racing is ok, however, members need to be aware of the protocols in place in the states they travel through and from where the birds will be liberated.

The [Wisconsin](#) site reports that they have lifted their quarantine zones. They do have a ban on movement to swap meets and open shows that are not affiliated with the county or state fairs.

In [Missouri](#), the state vet has recently said they are not allowing birds in from other states. They consider any gathering of birds as exhibition and disallowing.

[North Carolina](#) (follow link for press release) has suspended shows through the end of 2015.

[Pennsylvania](#) (follow link for press release) has suspended shows through the end of 2015.

[Kentucky](#) (follow link for press release) is allowing in-state bird activity only - nothing coming into the state and nothing leaving the state.

[Indiana](#) (follow link for press release) as of May 27, ceased all bird movements to events in the state that allow commingling of birds from different locations. This includes shows, exhibitions and public sales (such as flea markets, swap meets, sale barns). This prohibition will stand until further notice, likely through the end of 2015

Most of this information is what had been previously reported, however, some states have had events occur and changes have been made.

Vets from our Scientific Taskforce were involved and working with us very early on participating in our initial calls with the USDA and continue to work with us.

We cannot stress enough the importance of members monitoring their individual sites as changes are being made often.

We will continue to send out alerts as we receive information or new developments occur.

The link for the United States Department of Agriculture is:

[United States Department of Agriculture](#)

To find your state websites, go to:

[State Department of Agriculture Directory](#)

[State Veterinarian Directory](#)

[Confirmed AI findings in the Unites States](#) (refresh the internet page for most current information.)

This is important! If you are aware of someone in the affected areas, please forward or print and share this message.

WHAT IS THE AU DOING?

1. We are in daily communication with state veterinarians as frequent changes occur. We share those changes with you via alerts in the electronic newsletter and the AU website. Right now, compliance with state regulations is important as we work through this crisis.
2. There will be a senate hearing in July that the AU lobbyist will attend. That may afford an opportunity for him to again present information illustrating the homing pigeon's lack of susceptibility to AI. We would hope ultimately this would lead to an exemption from state regulation when this type of issue arises.

Members' input is always appreciated and taken into consideration in these situations. You are important to us and the reason we exist, and we continue to work on your behalf.

AU Bio-Security Recommendations

Basic bio-security measures should always be used. It is more important than ever to make sure you are cleaning your loft regularly, washing hands going in and out of the loft, monitoring or perhaps restricting others from going in and out of your loft and placing new birds in a quarantine section before integrating them with your other birds.

Several years ago, former board members, Tommy Erskine and Dr. Gary Braden, developed bio-security measures for AU members to follow. Subsequently, this document was reviewed by the USDA. The USDA indicated the bio-security measures presented were a great model for AU members to follow.

AU Bio-Security Recommendations are found at <http://pigeon.org/biosecurity.htm>

Other Ways You Can Help

The AU also developed the Loft Certification Program many years ago. We have encouraged members to participate in this self-regulating program to illustrate optimum care is provided the birds. It is achieved through a point system and is based on practicing basic bio-security. The [AU Loft Certification Program](#) doesn't cost anything. For more information, please feel free to call the national office (800-755-2778).