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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Poultry Owners Encouraged to Increase Biosecurity Measures
as Additional Cases of Avian Flu are Identified.**

Coldwater, MI – Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has announced additional cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a non-commercial backyard flock in Macomb County. The first non-commercial flock detection occurred in Kalamazoo County in February. Whether you have a few backyard birds or a large commercial flock, following these biosecurity measures is fundamental to protecting the health of Michigan's domestic birds:

- Preventing contact between domestic and wild birds by bringing them indoors or ensuring their outdoor area is fully enclosed.
- Washing your hands before and after handling birds as well as when moving between different coops.
- Disinfecting boots and other gear when moving between coops.
- Not sharing equipment or other supplies between coops or other farms.
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment and other supplies between uses. If it cannot be disinfected, discard it.
- Using well or municipal water as drinking water for birds.
- Keeping poultry feed secure so there is no contact between the feed/feed ingredients and wild birds or rodents.

Poultry owners and caretakers should watch for unusual deaths, a drop in egg production, a significant decrease in water consumption, or an increase in sick birds. If avian influenza is

suspected, contact MDARD **immediately** at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours).

“At this time, the risk to human health is low, unless you have been in direct contact with sick birds, dead birds, or wild or domestic birds confirmed as having HAPI. Persons at highest risk are those who work or care for poultry flocks. If you have been exposed and begin having influenza like symptoms, contact your local health department as soon as possible. When contacting your primary care physician, or other healthcare provider, be sure they are notified of your exposure to any sick or dead birds. BHSJ, MDHHS, and the CDC continue to monitor the situation in collaboration with MDARD,” says Rebecca Burns, Health Officer.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For more information, contact your local office, visit www.bhsj.org, follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/BHSJCHA or Instagram www.instagram.com/bhsj_healthagency.

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