

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, July 5, 2022.

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With a new Jefferson County detection, Washington leads the nation in backyard flocks with bird flu. A backyard flock in Jefferson County tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) on July 1, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture. With 29 total backyard flocks impacted, Washington now leads the nation in the number of infected backyard flocks.

Dr. Itle, Washington State veterinarian, said, "We're really facing an unprecedented situation. Our staff has stepped up to the challenge and has done a tremendous job responding to these reports, identifying which flocks are infected, and taking quick action to limit the spread of the disease." Despite the high number of detections in backyard flocks, no commercial flocks have yet had detections. This is important for commercial producers but also for the state's food security and economy. Eggs are regularly one of Washington's top 10 commodities with a value of over \$220 million in 2020.

Dr. Itle said, "Even though the extra biosecurity measures have put an extra burden on both backyard and commercial flock owners, the good news is that it is working. Those that have kept their flocks isolated and have been careful not to bring the virus in themselves still have healthy flocks." Itle continues to recommend that flock owners keep their birds confined and covered until 30 days after the last detection of HPAI in the state. The unseasonably cold, wet conditions have caused both migratory birds and the virus to linger in the environment.

Itle said, "In Europe, they have been dealing with this virus continuously for the past 18 months. While we hope that won't be the case here, it is a possibility and we should be prepared for it. "We could be in this for the long haul," he said.

WSDA has numerous resources for flock owners to learn about Washington State Department of Agriculture and protect their flocks, including a bird flu webpage (<https://agr.wa.gov/birdflu>) with information about each confirmed flock with HPAI, an interactive map, frequently asked questions, and a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/WAStateDeptAg/>) dedicated to updates about bird flu in Washington.

If your flock experiences sudden death or illness of multiple birds, call WSDA's Sick Bird Hotline at 1-800-606-3056. Birds that have already died should be double-bagged and kept in a cooler on ice until WSDA veterinarians can arrange for sampling. Sick or dead wild birds should be reported using the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife online reporting tool (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/get-involved/report-observations>).

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On the COVID-19 front, Jefferson County Public Health is streamlining its COVID-19 case data reporting as it transitions from an emergency response to a more sustainable and long-term approach to monitoring the virus. The first-ever weekly report published on Monday, June 27 and will appear every subsequent Monday. In addition to shifting to weekly reporting, data will now appear on an interactive dashboard, designed with new data presentation software.

This morning was the Board of County Commissioners Meeting and Dr. Berry said. "Cases are flat, but still at a high level nationally, down in the northeast, up in the south but flat here out west. They are showing some signs of easing...In Jefferson County the two-week case rate is 715 per hundred thousand, a slight decrease. No one is

currently hospitalized, though one person was over the weekend but they are at home now. Total Cases: 4,770, and 30 people have died due to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the pandemic began.

The risk of COVID-19 transmission in public, indoor spaces is high...very,very, very high. Wearing a well-fitting N-95 mask or similar is still your best protection from infection, even if you are vaccinated.

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The Washington State Patrol wants the public to be aware that a new acronym is being added to the state missing persons alerts system. A Missing Indigenous Person Alert – or MIPA, as it would appear on the roadside signs – will join AMBER and SILVER. There are too many letters in the phrase Missing Indigenous Person for a roadside sign, and since indigenous people in Washington State go missing in greater numbers proportionally than in the general population, they want to get the word out for the rare occasion it is needed. So, if you see a MIPA, it stands for Missing Indigenous Person Alert!

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Wednesday.