



HPAI COMMUNICATIONS

WA-DOH Media Relations/Risk Comms.



Agenda

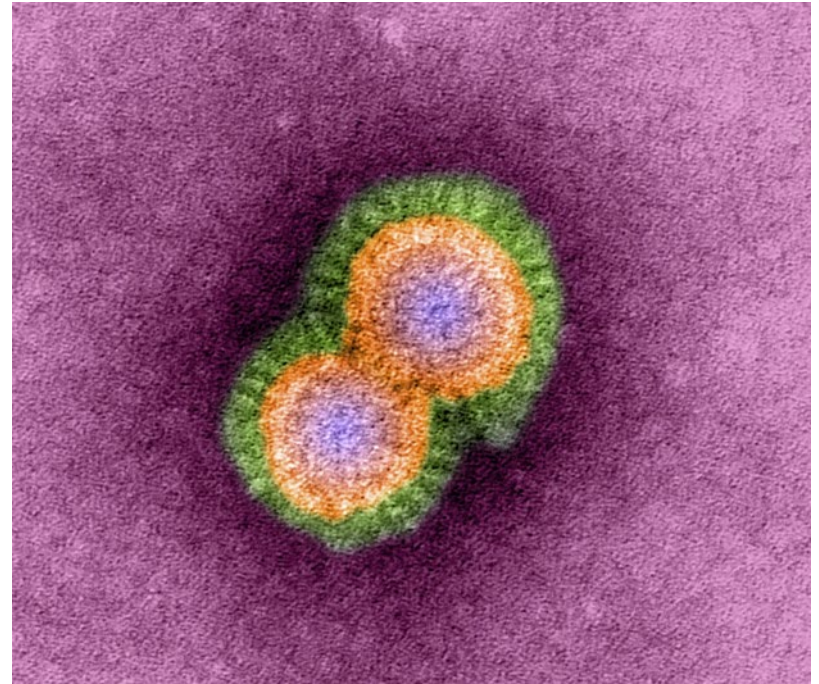
- HPAI definition, history of detections
- Incidents of human infections with HPAI in 2024 and 2025
- Public information campaign aimed at farm workers
- Lessons learned
- Discussion

What is HPAI?

Highly Pathogenic Avian influenza (HPAI or bird flu) is a disease caused by infection with avian influenza Type A viruses.

HPAI occurs naturally in wild aquatic birds, but can also infect other bird species, wildlife and domestic animals.

Bird flu viruses can also infect people and make them sick.





HPAI detections

- H5N1 (HPAI) circulates in wild birds and was first detected in the U.S. in January 2022.
- It was first identified in Washington state in a backyard flock in May 2022.
- It has infected domestic poultry as well as wild and domestic mammals, including cattle and cats.
- Other subtypes that have infected humans are H6, H7, H9, and H10.

A 3.5-million-pound problem: More than a million chickens near Pasco have bird flu

Anna King
December 16, 2022 / 11:00 am



Confirmed and probable human cases since 2024

National Total Cases: 71

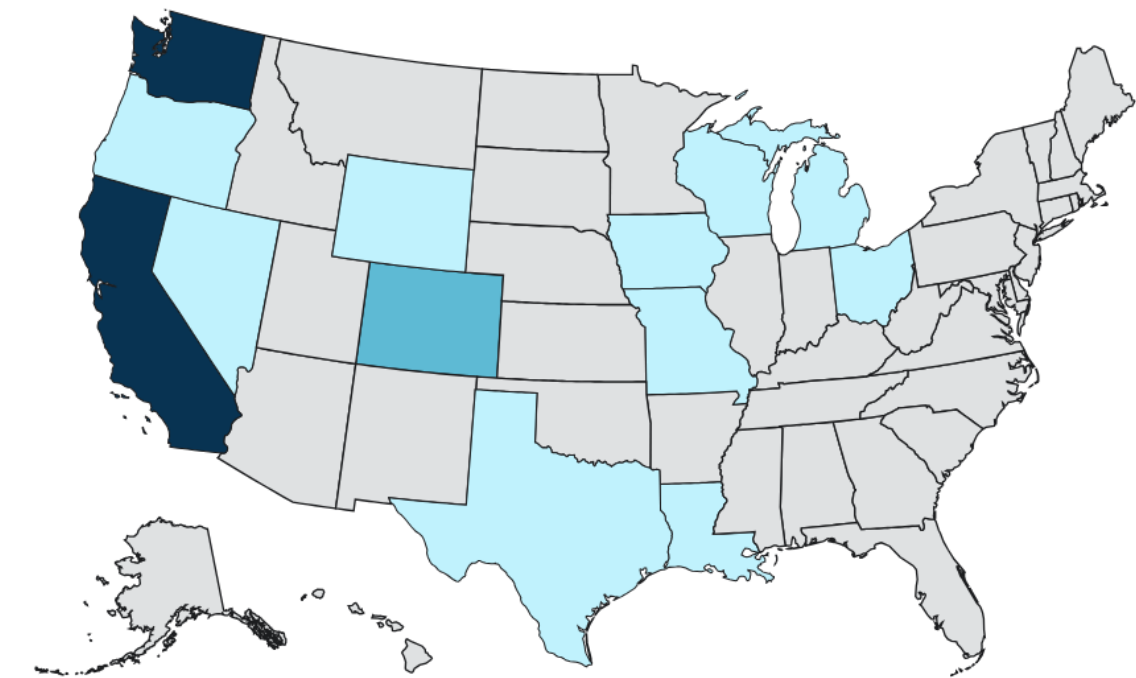
Cases	Exposure Source
41	Dairy Herds (Cattle)*
24	Poultry Farms and Culling Operations*
3	Other Animal Exposure†
3	Exposure Source Unknown‡

NOTE: One additional case was previously detected in a poultry worker in Colorado in 2022. Louisiana reported the first A(H5) bird flu death in the U.S.

*Exposure Associated with Commercial Agriculture and Related Operations

†Exposure was related to other animals such as backyard flocks, wild birds, or other mammals

‡Exposure source was not able to be identified



HPAI detections

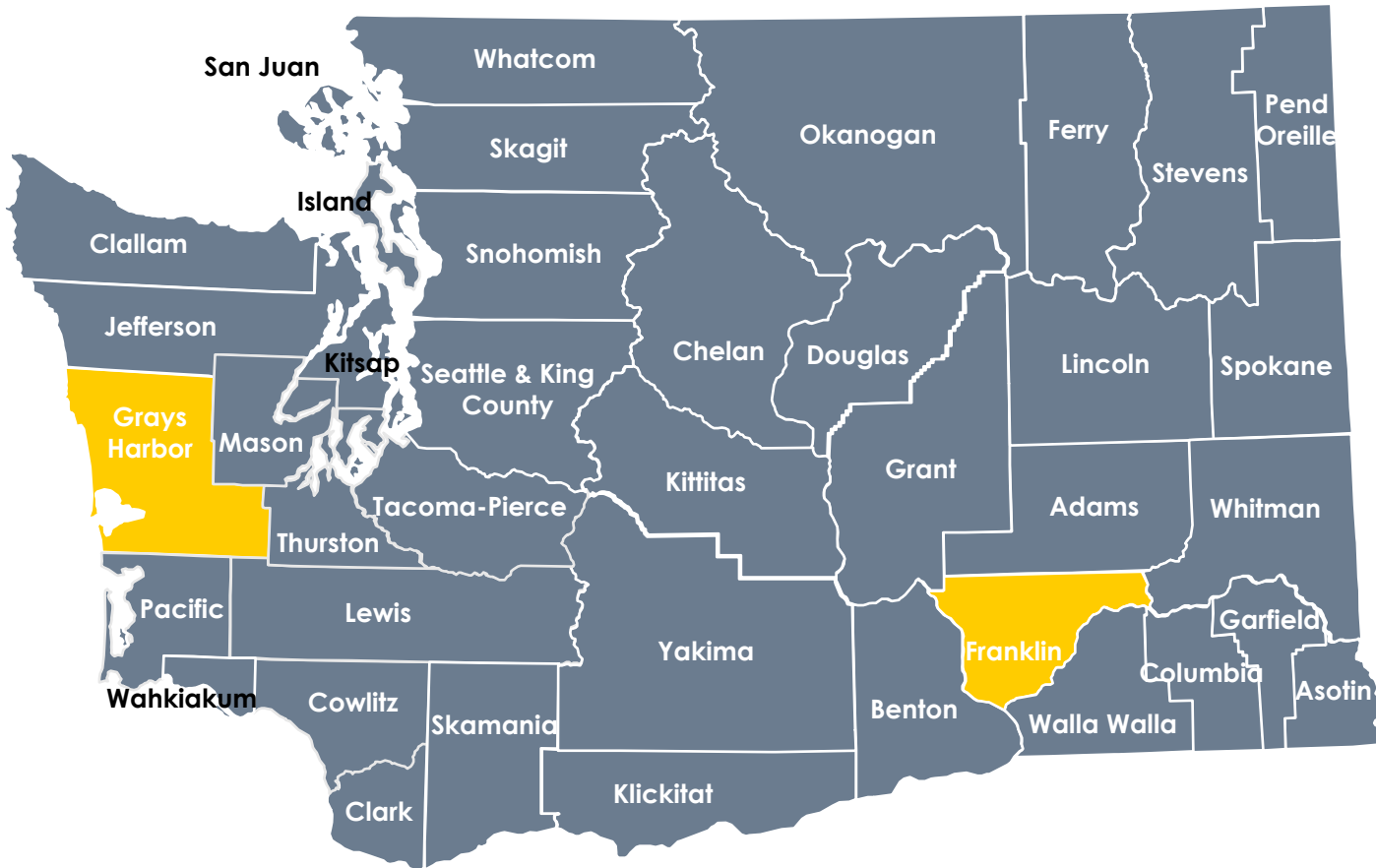


DATE CONFIRMED	COUNTY	FLOCK SIZE	FLOCK TYPE	BIRD TYPES
2024				
11/19/2024	Whatcom	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/07/2024	Snohomish	Medium	Backyard	Mixed
11/04/2024	Okanogan	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/04/2024	Stevens	Medium	Backyard	Mixed
10/25/2024	Lewis	Small	Backyard	Mixed
10/18/2024	Kitsap	Small	Backyard	Mixed
10/16/2024	Franklin	Large	Commercial	Chickens

DATE CONFIRMED	COUNTY	FLOCK SIZE	FLOCK TYPES	BIRD TYPES
2025				
12/16/25	Pierce	Small	Backyard	Mixed
12/12/25	Lewis	Small	Backyard	Mixed
12/9/25	Island	Small	Backyard	Chickens
12/8/25	Jefferson	Small	Backyard	Mixed
12/3/25	Clark	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/24/25	San Juan	Small	Backyard	Ducks & Geese
11/21/25	Jefferson	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/21/25	Snohomish	Small	Backyard	Chickens
11/18/2025	Grays Harbor	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/17/2025	Whatcom	Small	Backyard	Mixed
11/06/2025	Snohomish	Small	Backyard	Ducks
10/10/2025	Grant	Large	Commercial	Chickens
2/10/2025	Mason	Small	Backyard	Ducks
1/24/2025	Franklin	Large	Commercial	Chickens

DATE CONFIRMED	COUNTY	FLOCK SIZE	FLOCK TYPES	BIRD TYPES
2026				
03/19/2026	Skagit	Medium	Backyard	Chickens
02/02/2026	Yakima	Small	Backyard	Mixed
1/16/2026	Yakima	Small	Backyard	Chickens
1/12/2026	Grant	Small	Backyard	Mixed

Human HPAI infections





Human Bird Flu Cases in Washington State Residents

Case Classification	Known Exposure	2024*	2025	2026	Total
Confirmed	Poultry	11	1	0	12
Probable	Poultry	3	0	0	3
Total		14	1	0	15

*Washington residency could not be confirmed for one case in 2024.

116 media inquiries on avian influenza since 2023

Franklin County HPAI cases

- On Oct. 18 2024, four workers at egg farm in Franklin County developed symptoms of HPAI
- The symptoms were unusual (conjunctivitis, congestion), raising issues about testing accuracy
- More than 100 other workers were potentially exposed. Several traveled to other states (Oregon, Minnesota)
- The cases were the first human infections recorded in Washington state



Franklin County HPAI cases

HEALTH

Franklin County poultry workers test positive for bird flu, state health officials investigating

Human and animal health agencies are working closely together to prevent further spread and better understand this strain of the illness.



- DOH took the lead on comms, at the request of Benton-Franklin HD
- The IMT stood for two weeks
- Fourteen people would test positive for H5N1
- We issued two press releases, held one briefing, answered dozens of calls a day.
- We created a Joint Information System with BFHD, CDC, WSDA, WSWF. Worked with WL&I and Oregon Health
- Translated materials in Spanish, Arabic

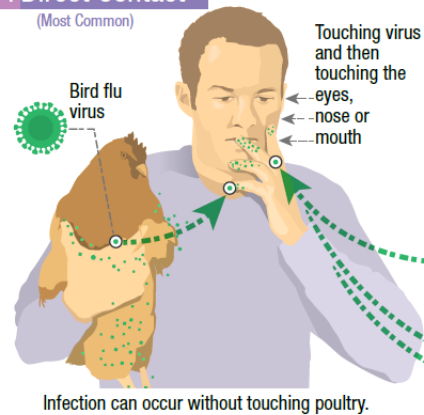
Franklin County HPAI cases

How Infected Backyard Poultry Could Spread Bird Flu to People

Human Infections with Bird Flu Viruses Rare But Possible

1 Direct Contact

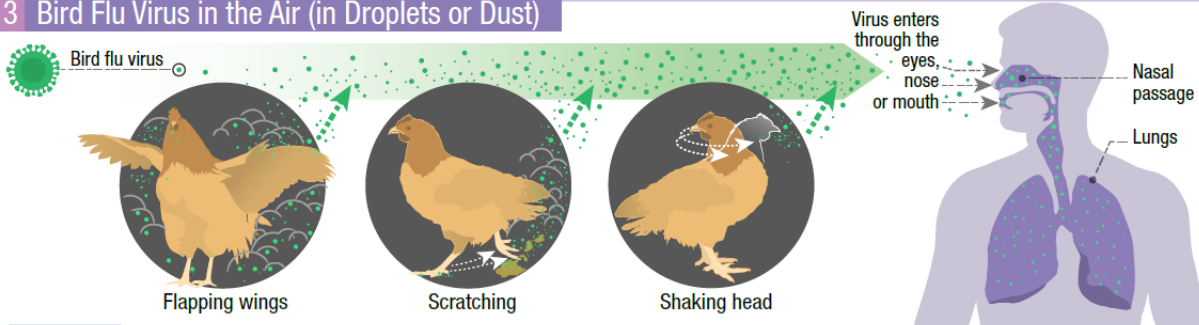
(Most Common)



2 Contaminated Surfaces



3 Bird Flu Virus in the Air (in Droplets or Dust)



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-in-humans.htm

CSS30154

Franklin County HPAI cases

ARABIC	ENGLISH
كيف يمكن للدواجن المصابة بالعدوى في الفناء الخلفي نقل مرض أنفلونزا الطيور إلى البشر	How Infected Backyard Poultry Could Spread Bird Flu to People
إن حالات عدوى البشر بفيروسات أنفلونزا الطيور نادرة ولكنها ممكنة	Human Infections with Bird Flu Viruses Rare But Possible
1. المخالطة المباشرة (الأكثر شيوعًا)	1 Direct Contact (Most Common)
لمس الفيروس ثم لمس العينين، أو الأنف، أو الفم	Touching virus and then touching the eyes, nose or mouth
فيروس أنفلونزا الطيور	Bird flu virus
يمكن أن تحدث العدوى دون لمس الدواجن.	Infection can occur without touching poultry.
2. الأسطح الملوثة	2 Contaminated Surfaces
لا تزال الطيور التي تبدو بصحة جيدة قادرة على نشر أنفلونزا الطيور	Healthy looking birds can still spread bird flu
فيروس أنفلونزا الطيور	Bird flu virus

Grays Harbor County HPAI case

SCIENCE & MEDICINE

New form of bird flu hospitalizes Washington state resident



Milk samples are transported for testing for HPAI, a strain of the H5N1 avian flu, at the Animal Health Diagnostic Center at Cornell University. (Michael M. Santiago / Getty Images)

Subscribers are Reading >

Four-story buildings allowed in some single-family zones under L.A.'s plan to delay SB 79

It's not just vaccines — parents are refusing other routine preventive care for newborns

L.A. Affairs: Everything was good. Then came the text I never wanted to get

Just outside Joshua Tree, this art fair set in a desert motel is building something you can't get in L.A.

Reality TV has become a cultural powerhouse. There's no stopping it

ADVERTISEMENT



- On Nov. 11, 2025, a 74-year-old patient at UW Harborview tested positive for influenza A H5
- The patient was a Grays Harbor County resident who kept yard birds
- The patient later died from complications of HPAI, marking the first known fatality from HPAI in Washington
- Testing identified H5N5 as the virus, a clade of avian influenza never seen in humans before

Grays Harbor County HPAI case



- We did not stand an IMT, but DOH took lead on communications
- DOH worked with PHSKC, Grays Harbor HD, Thurston HD, CDC, WSDA, UW Medicine, medical centers in Aberdeen, Olympia.
- DOH fielded dozens of calls daily from around the world
- We issued three press releases and held two news scrums

Grays Harbor County HPAI case



Q&A with DOH about Avian Influenza - Shared screen with speaker view

Nov 13, 2025 01:19 PM

Download (4 files)



Audio Transcript

Search transcript



Mitch Borden

05:30

Hi, yeah, I'm with K&Kicks, public radio station. If this is confirmed, what are the next steps? What will the DOH take to, check if, you know, anyone else has been exposed, or... yeah, what comes after that?



Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett

05:44

Well, the next steps are to investigate for where this patient might have gotten bird flu, and as I mentioned, common risk factors are exposure to ill or dead birds, either domestic or wild birds.

Responses - Lessons learned

- Write draft releases/talking points ahead of time
- Educate your leadership about emergency comms procedures/approval loops ahead of time
- Define your terms and thresholds early (what is a positive?)
- Build trust with your SMEs
- Build relationships with sister agencies; learn their rules and comms procedures
- Establish a JIC/JIS right away
- News scrums will save you time and pain
- Learn procedures for same-day translation
- Coordinate with community outreach

CDC HPAI grant

After the 2024 HPAI flu event, the Washington Department of Health applied for and received \$31,000 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to institute a seasonal Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza advertising campaign aimed at agricultural workers in poultry and dairy farms.

Goal

The campaign focused on educating workers on what is HPAI, how it is transmitted to humans, and how to take precautions at work to be safer.

AVIAN INFLUENZA GUIDANCE FOR BACKYARD FLOCK OWNERS

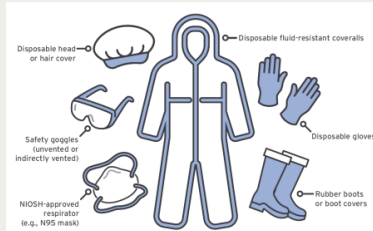


What is Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

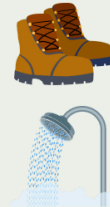
H5N1 is a virus that can cause a disease known as avian influenza or "bird flu." Although it is rare, people can get sick with bird flu when they come into contact with infected birds or animals, their body fluids, feces, or their environments.

How to Protect Yourself Around Sick or Dead Poultry

- 1 Wear protective clothing when working with sick or dead birds or their environments. You can buy these items online or at many retail, hardware, or feed stores.
- 2 Wash your hands throughout the day, after removing protective clothing, and before eating or drinking.



- 3 Keep a separate pair of shoes and other supplies you use when caring for birds outside your home. Remove contaminated clothing outside and shower after working with sick or dead birds or their environments.



AVIAN INFLUENZA GUIDANCE FOR DAIRY WORKERS

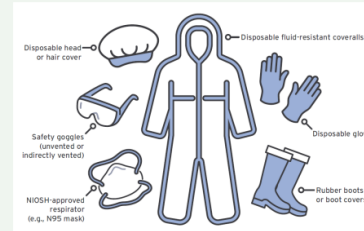


What is Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

H5N1 is a virus that can cause a disease known as avian influenza or "bird flu." Although it is rare, people can get sick with bird flu when they come into contact with infected birds or animals, their body fluids, feces, or their environments.

How Dairy Workers Can Protect Themselves:

- 1 Wear protective clothing when working with sick or dead animals, feces, or milk. This equipment should be provided by your employer.
- 2 Wash your hands throughout the day, after removing protective clothing, and before eating or drinking.



- 3 Raw milk and raw milk products may contain harmful bacteria or viruses, including H5N1 virus, and consuming raw milk is a risk for infection. Pasteurization removes these germs.





CDC HPAI grant – Tactics

- In-house campaign (copy, images, direct buys from vendors)
- Spanish language community radio ads or public service announcements
- Inserts or print ads in Spanish-language community print media
- Fliers for community organizations

Radio ads

- Focused on stations in Central and Eastern Washington – areas with farm outbreaks
- Aimed at Spanish speaking workers – the population most affected by work exposures



Radio ads

- Stations and networks running the ads:
 - Bustos Media Holdings (stations in Yakima, Mabton, Wenatchee, Prosser, other East/Central communities)
 - KDNA (serving Granger/Yakima)
 - La Pera Radio
 - Townsquare Media (Tri-Cities)



Print ads

¿TRABAJA CON ANIMALES?

PROTÉJASE CONTRA LA INFLUENZA AVIAR



¿QUÉ ES LA INFLUENZA AVIAR?

- La influenza aviar, o "gripe aviar", es un virus que suele encontrarse en las aves silvestres.
- La gripe aviar puede infectar a otros animales, como pollos, vacas y gatos.
- Las personas pueden enfermarse por estar en contacto con animales infectados, en especial si trabajan cerca de ellos.
- Si se enferma, consulte a su médico e informe que trabaja con animales. Las personas con gripe aviar pueden experimentar lo siguiente:



Fiebre, tos, náuseas o vómitos, dolor de garganta u ojos enrojecidos (conjuntivitis)

¿CÓMO PUEDO PROTEGERME?

- Use ropa y equipo de protección cuando trabaje cerca de aves u otros animales enfermos o muertos. Su empleador debe proveerle este equipo.
- Colóquese la vacuna estacional contra la gripe cada año. Esta vacuna no detiene la infección que causa el virus de la gripe aviar, pero puede prevenir el contagio simultáneo de la gripe estacional y la gripe aviar.

ESCANEE PARA OBTENER MÁS INFORMACIÓN




DOH 420-684, November 2025. Para solicitar este documento en otro formato, llame al 1-800-525-0127. Las personas con sordera o problemas de audición deben llamar al 711 (servicio de rele de Washington) o enviar un correo electrónico a ask.assurances@dc.wa.gov.

Jueves, 19 de febrero, 2026

LOCAL 3
El Sol de Yakima • elsoledeyakima.com

SI YO PUEDO, TÚ PUEDES

Elizabeth García es instructora del programa Comer para Vivir en Yakima



¿Qué es el programa Comer para Vivir?
El programa Comer para Vivir es un programa de nutrición y salud que ayuda a las personas a comer bien y a vivir mejor. El programa es gratuito y está disponible para todos los residentes de Yakima.

¿Qué clases son gratuitas?
Las clases son gratuitas y están disponibles para todos los residentes de Yakima. Las clases son en español y están diseñadas para personas que no hablan inglés.

¿Qué se puede aprender en las clases?
En las clases se puede aprender sobre nutrición, salud y cómo preparar comidas saludables. También se puede aprender sobre cómo acceder a los servicios de salud y cómo manejar enfermedades crónicas.

¿Cómo puedo contactar al programa?
Puede contactar al programa llamando al 509-425-4777 o visitando el sitio web comerparavivir.org.

¿Qué se necesita para asistir a las clases?
No se necesita nada para asistir a las clases. Solo se necesita traer una identificación y un correo electrónico.

¿Dónde se ofrecen las clases?
Las clases se ofrecen en varios lugares, incluyendo el Centro Comunitario de Yakima y el Centro de Salud de Yakima.

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Fliers

DO YOU WORK WITH ANIMALS?

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BIRD FLU



WHAT IS BIRD FLU?

- Bird flu, or avian influenza, is a virus that is usually found in wild birds.
- Bird flu can infect other animals, such as chickens, cows, and cats.
- People can get sick from infected animals, especially if they work closely with them.
- If you become sick, see your doctor and tell them you work with animals. People with bird flu might experience:



Fever, cough, nausea or vomiting, sore throat, or reddened eyes (conjunctivitis)

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

- Wear protective clothing and equipment when working around sick or dead birds or other animals. Your employer should provide this equipment.
- Get the seasonal flu vaccine each year. This vaccine does not prevent bird flu infection, but it can prevent getting sick with seasonal flu and bird flu at the same time.



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¿TRABAJA CON ANIMALES?

PROTÉJASE CONTRA LA GRIPE AVIAR



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SCAN TO LEARN MORE:



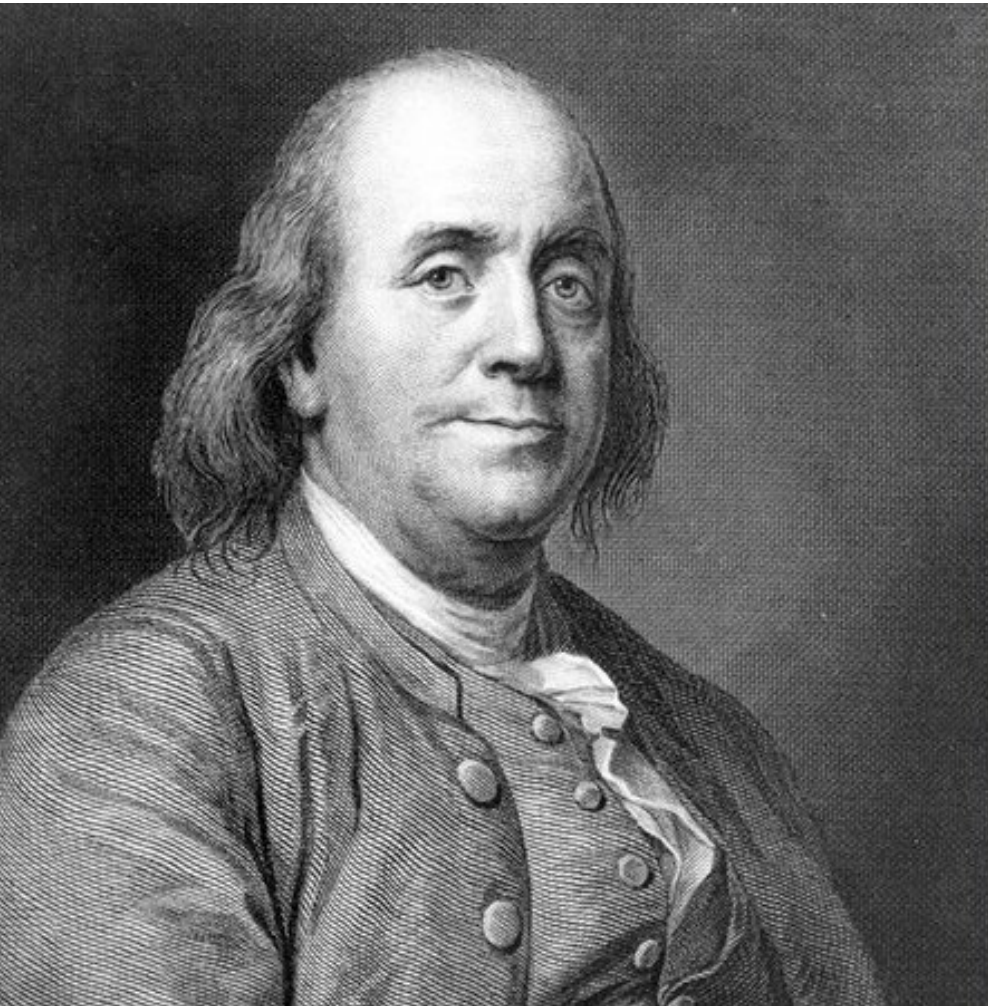
ESCANEE PARA OBTENER MÁS INFORMACIÓN



Community ads – Lessons Learned

- You CAN do an advertising or outreach campaign in house
- Community media is the most affordable way to reach your audience
- Learn to be flexible
- Coordinate content with sister agencies
- Learn procurement/purchase order procedures and who your agency contacts are
- Double your expected timeline for review and purchase approval

Discussion



**By failing to
prepare, you are
preparing to fail.**
Benjamin Franklin

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