



AVIAN INFLUENZA: The Facts

- ❖ **Poultry products purchased in Texas and throughout the U.S. are safe for consumption.**
 - ❖ **There is no risk of contracting the avian flu virus from properly handled and cooked poultry.**
 - ❖ **The U.S. has never imported poultry from countries where cases of avian influenza have occurred.**
 - ❖ **The Asian form of avian influenza--H5N1 HPAI-- has never been detected in the U.S.**
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→ Unlike fresh poultry that is sold and purchased in live bird markets in Asia and the developing world, the overwhelming majority of chickens and turkeys intended for sale as food in Texas and throughout the U.S. are raised in sheltered conditions, greatly reducing the risk of exposure to wild birds or other carriers of the avian flu virus.

→ The chicken, turkey and other poultry you buy at your supermarket or corner grocery come from U.S. farms, except for a small amount imported from Canada. We do not import poultry from countries affected by the “Asian Bird Flu.”

→ To safeguard against widespread contamination, should an outbreak of H5 or H7 strains of AI occur, strict controls are in place to provide for immediate eradication that include destroying and disposing, through environmentally sound methods, any flock in which dangerous strains of avian influenza are found or through controlled slaughter and strict quarantines—in keeping with recommendations of the World Organization for Animal Health.

→ With ordinary and proper cooking methods, microorganisms associated with the avian flu virus are inactivated. As a normal precaution, washing your hands and cooking surfaces and utensils after handling raw poultry will greatly reduce the risk of contracting any virus. There are no known cases in which human infection is believed to have resulted from handling poultry meat.

→ The U.S. Department of Agriculture confirms that proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection against the avian flu virus, as it does against many viruses and bacteria, including Salmonella and E.coli.

→ The U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed the United States is free of H5N1 HPAI virus in both humans and poultry. The government and the U.S. poultry industry have developed extensive testing and surveillance programs to provide early detection and isolate any outbreak that should occur.

→ The U.S. Congress appropriated \$23 million in fiscal year 2005 for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to begin implementation of a long-term, domestic avian influenza control program. Congress reaffirmed its commitment to the long-term strategy and allocated \$28.3 million for fiscal year 2006. To reduce the risk of disease spreading overseas to the U.S., the U.S. Department of Agriculture, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Health Organization are working with HPAI affected countries to help prepare for, manage and eradicate HPAI outbreaks.