



April 3, 2019

**To:** Animal Control Agencies, Humane Associations, and all other organizations or groups performing rescue or animal control functions within the Southern California regional quarantine area.

**Re:** Live Avian Species

In May of 2018, the Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND) was detected in Southern California. VND is a highly contagious and nearly always fatal disease among poultry <sup>(1)</sup>, but all birds are at risk.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been working to eradicate this disease. VND has been reported in five different counties; Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Ventura, Riverside, and most recently, a single bird was diagnosed with VND in San Mateo County.

On February 27, 2019, the state veterinarian issued a regional quarantine pursuant to the Food and Agricultural Code, Section 9562 for all of Los Angeles County and large areas of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The quarantine prohibits the movement of all poultry <sup>(1)</sup>, poultry products, associated poultry materials and equipment, and non-poultry species that have been in contact with poultry.

This letter is offered as guidance to allow for the continuation of your day-to-day duties while maintaining adherence to the quarantine. The intent of the quarantine is to stop the spread of the virus so that the disease may be eradicated. When dealing with a foreign disease outbreak as aggressive as VND, all stray birds in designated quarantine areas are considered potentially infected and must be treated accordingly. All personnel, equipment, and vehicles that are in contact with birds (particularly poultry), need to follow all biosecurity guidance for VND <sup>(2)</sup>. What follows are options available to you while the regional quarantine is in effect:

If an animal of any poultry species is found at-large or stray within the regional quarantine area:

- a) The animal should be humanely euthanized on site. The remains must be placed in a double plastic bag, the bag should be tightly closed, and the outside sprayed with a disinfectant approved for VND <sup>(3)</sup>. Once inside the facility, the animal shall be disposed of by cremation, rendering, or burial (landfills are the preferred location)
- b) If an organization is unable to humanely euthanize the bird on site, the bird must be securely transported to an isolated area away from all other birds at their facility, and humanely euthanized upon intake, and disposed of as mentioned above.
- c) Should an organization not humanely euthanize a bird, the bird shall be placed in an isolated area, specifically dedicated for that purpose, away from all other resident birds. Any employee tasked with the care of birds in isolation must not be in contact with any other birds or be an owner of birds to prevent cross contamination.
- d) For organizations that don't house birds, but have partner organizations that house birds for them, (rescue groups, rehabilitation facilities, foster families, etc.) These organizations must follow the same procedures described above for animal control agencies. If a bird



must go through an intake process that involves triage, weighing, photography, etc. All staff in contact with poultry must wear personal protective equipment (PPE), a minimum of gloves, protective eyewear and disposable smocks.

Any surfaces in contact with birds must be cleaned and disinfected (animal control vehicles, trucks, nets, cages, tables, computer keyboards, cameras, scales, etc.) Refer to videos on the CDFA Website: *Avian Disease Prevention for Animal Control Officers and Biosecurity Training for Commercial Poultry Farms.* <sup>(4)</sup>

- e) No avian species, including all poultry, shall be redeemed by their owners, placed for adoption, rescue, or fostered while the regional quarantine is in place. <sup>(5)</sup>

We understand that some animal shelters have specific holding periods for their impounded animals, although most holding laws only apply to dogs and cats.

If an organization decides to hold a poultry species, they must comply with the following regional quarantine requirements:

- a) Enhanced biosecurity practices must be put in place. <sup>(2, 4)</sup>
- b) Twice a week sampling for VND must be performed at the organization's expense.
- c) Any sick or dead bird must be reported to the Sick Bird Hotline 866-922-2473
- d) Any movement of birds beyond the intake and including when and if birds return to owners/new-owners would require a permit from the CDFA.

Should you have any questions about these guidelines or adhering to the regional quarantine please send an email to [SFSPermits@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:SFSPermits@cdfa.ca.gov) or call the Sick Bird Hot Line 866-922-2473

Sincerely,



Annette Jones, D.V.M.

Director and State Veterinarian

- (1) **Poultry** means all chickens, turkeys, turkins, pheasants, peafowl, guinea fowl, quail, ducks, geese, swans, gallinules, doves, pigeons, grouse, partridges, francolin, tinamou, ostriches, and other ratites (including but not limited to the rhea, emu, and cassowary), and hatching or embryonated eggs from the species mentioned above. **Non-poultry** means all avian species other than poultry.
- (2) <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/df-biosecurity>
- (3) [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/emergency\\_management/downloads/potential-disinfectants-to-use-against-vnd.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/emergency_management/downloads/potential-disinfectants-to-use-against-vnd.pdf)
- (4) [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal\\_Health/BioSpecies/CommercialPoultryBiosecurity.html](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/BioSpecies/CommercialPoultryBiosecurity.html)
- (5) Under strict criteria, and only with CDFA approval, a bird may be returned to an owner, put up for adoption, rescued, transferred or fostered. This includes all non-poultry species, and in rare cases giant poultry species (Ostrich, Emu, Rhea, etc.) All non-poultry species must be tested before being returned to an owner, rescued, transferred or fostered, due to them be considered as potentially exposed during the time they were at large or stray, this also applies to the giant poultry species mentioned above. The owner/new owner must incur the costs of testing the bird twice a week for four weeks, the bird should be away from any other bird during this testing period. Therefore, all testing will be at the expense of either an animal control or humane association facility, the facility of an organization or group performing animal control functions, or the owner/new owner of the bird.