

Avian funds

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the disease is still present. About 50 flocks, representing 2.5 million birds, are scheduled for re-testing.

In the recently initiated surveillance or poultry watch program, approximately 350 poultrymen have signed up to participate. Through this program, the task force hopes to monitor more closely where the disease is, but producer participation is the key to its success, Baggett said.

The bulk of the participants, Baggett said, include small producers and backyard flocks; however, larger commercial producers are also included.

For the program which began Jan. 16, farmers are asked to collect weekly any birds which died of normal causes. These birds are to be wrapped in plastic bags and then placed in garbage cans at the ends of farm lanes where task force personnel will pick them up. The birds will be processed at the task force lab, William Penn Way, and sent to Ames, Iowa, for further testing.

"In order to get ahead of the disease, we have to find out what is in the rest of the flocks," Fichtner said of the poultry watch program.

"We hope within the next 60 days to have a clear idea of what is in those flocks," he added.

House approves \$2 million

In other news, the House approved Tuesday a \$2 million ap-

propriation intended to assist the state's poultry farmers who lost birds prior to the "extraordinary emergency" declaration. The bill has been sent to Gov. Thornburgh who is expected to sign it.

The state Department of Agriculture plans to use the money to reimburse bird losses prior to the Nov. 9 emergency declaration. Approximately \$400,000 will be allocated to indemnity payments, while the remaining \$1.6 million will be used to defray cleaning and disinfecting costs.

The Pa. Poultry Federation recommended the following reimbursement formula, based on housing capacity, for cleaning and disinfecting costs: broilers at six cents per bird; turkeys at 21 cents per bird; and layers, pullets and breeders at 12 cents per bird.

Based on the housing capacity, the formula was derived at through a survey of costs incurred

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has provided \$34,500 to two Pennsylvania universities to begin research on avian influenza, the virus disease threatening the poultry industry.

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell said, "Avian influenza has baffled the nation's top poultry health specialists for many months. Many very important questions about the disease, its spread, detection and prevention remain.

in cleaning broiler, layer and turkey houses, said John Hoffman, director of the Poultry Federation. The formula, Hoffman said, has received favorable consideration from the Department of Agriculture.

Pa. funds Avian research

"Pennsylvania's poultry farms have become a testing ground for future work to prevent this disease from recurring. This research and testing is of critical importance," he said.

The research grants, authorized by the Agricultural Research Committee, will provide funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to The Pennsylvania State University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Penn State researchers will focus on "Avian Influenza Surveillance and Virus Identification by Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA)." This \$20,500 project is designed to adapt an automated virus detection system to avian in-

fluenza using blood samples. Results would be applicable to any laboratory used to test for the disease.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania will analyze "Pathogenesis of Avian Influenza Infection of Chickens." This \$14,000 project will conduct basic research on the disease, its spread, survival of the virus in the environment and other factors now in question.

"I am confident that the efforts put forth by Pennsylvania's top-notch agricultural research institutions will help develop concrete answers for the state's poultry farmers," said Hollowell. The two projects should last approximately 18 months.

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