

California Department of Food and Agriculture



CDFA News Release

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EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE ERADICATION: A MULTI-AGENCY CHALLENGE
State Resource Sharing Expedites Eradication Effort

LOS ALAMITOS, CA -- Governor Gray Davis' recent emergency proclamation for the Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreak in southern California allows for the expansion of resources needed to eradicate the deadly virus. The cooperative effort between the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and other state and federal agencies includes the dual challenges of locating and depopulating infected birds and preventing further spread of the virus. The program is extremely labor intensive.

"Access to additional state personnel and resources expedites the eradication effort," said CDFA Secretary William (Bill) J. Lyons, Jr. "CDFA veterinarians and staff are working closely with OES, the California Conservation Corps, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). If need be, we can bring in personnel from other state agencies with a minimum of procedural delays."

The project is a cooperative program with CDFA, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the county agriculture commissioner or animal health officer in each affected county.

The OES, which utilizes California's Standardized Emergency Management System to ensure coordination of information and resources in emergency responses involving multiple agencies, coordinates overall state response to emergencies and is providing personnel to help coordinate emergency management and public works officials in the affected counties. In addition, OES has called upon the CDF for its expertise in incident management to assist CDFA with the logistics of the large-scale eradication effort.

"As we have done before in tackling response to major earthquakes, fires and floods, OES will bring to bear all necessary state resources to support CDFA in its mission to rid the state of Exotic Newcastle Disease," said OES Director Dallas Jones.

Exotic Newcastle Disease is a highly contagious illness that is known to spread rapidly and is associated with high mortality rates. Movement of infected birds or contaminated materials can easily spread the disease.

The disease does not pose a risk to human health. Poultry and egg products are safe to consume.

In response to the outbreak of the disease, the CDFA and the USDA have placed a quarantine on poultry products in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties, where the presence of Exotic Newcastle Disease has been confirmed, as well as in Imperial, Orange and Santa Barbara counties to create a "buffer zone" and prevent further spread of the disease.

A team of 700 from all of the cooperating agencies is working seven-days-a-week in southern California to try to stop the spread of Exotic Newcastle Disease. An additional 300 people are expected by the end of the month. -30-