

California Department of Food and Agriculture



News Release

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**CENTRAL VALLEY SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM FOR EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE TO
BEGIN MARCH 3**

MODESTO- The Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) Task Force is scheduled to begin a surveillance program in the Central Valley on March 3rd, with the first surveys of backyard bird flocks slated to take place in Stanislaus and Fresno Counties.

At this point, END is not known to exist north of the Tehachapi mountain range. However, the surveillance program, which may ultimately extend to 20 Northern California counties, is intended to give the task force a head start if the disease does become established in the Central Valley.

“Exotic Newcastle Disease has already cost tens of millions of dollars to fight,” said California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary William (Bill) J. Lyons, Jr. “Many millions more will be lost if it is allowed to spread. This surveillance program is critical if we are to attain our goal of prompt

The surveys will occur in cooperation with county agricultural commissioners, and consist of teams of task force members going door-to-door in residential areas thought to have substantial populations of backyard birds. The teams will inquire about numbers of birds on the premises, ask about the health of those birds, and provide Exotic Newcastle Disease informational materials.

California Governor Gray Davis and USDA Secretary Ann Veneman each proclaimed emergencies for END in January. A quarantine remains in effect in San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, Orange, Imperial, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties.

To date, END has infected 17 commercial facilities and 1,997 residential properties. The disease poses no risk to public health.

For more information

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