



State of Utah

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## News Release

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### **Virulent Newcastle Disease Found in Exhibition Poultry in Utah County**

(Salt Lake City) – The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) confirms that exhibition poultry (i.e., privately owned/non-commercial chickens), imported from California at the beginning of January and placed with a small domestic flock (250 birds) in Utah County, have tested positive for Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND). This is the first confirmed case of VND in Utah.

UDAF authorities received a report of a possible case of VND in Utah County earlier this week and quarantined the site. Yesterday, the presence of VND in the birds was confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Iowa.

The birds were brought to Utah from California, which is currently experiencing an active outbreak of VND. In Utah, the disease is currently contained to one domestic flock and has not been detected in any commercial poultry flocks.

In California, where the suspect birds originated, there have been 299 confirmed cases of VND since May 2018.

VND does not pose a food safety concern. No human cases of VND have ever occurred from eating poultry products.

However, VND is a contagious and fatal viral disease that affects all species of birds, including poultry. Even birds that have been vaccinated are susceptible. Most birds die without showing any clinical signs. Signs in affected birds can include sudden death, sneezing, gasping for air, nasal discharge, coughing, green and watery diarrhea, drooping wings, tremors, circling, and swelling around the eyes and neck.

“The disease is spread when healthy birds come in contact with bodily fluids from infected birds, and contaminated surfaces,” said UDAF State Veterinarian, Dr. Barry Pittman. This disease can be

transmitted through manure, egg flats, crates, farming materials or equipment, vehicles, or through people who have handled these materials and their clothing, hands and shoes.

If you own domestic poultry (e.g., chickens, geese or ducks) in Utah County—and you observe any sick or dying birds—call 801-520-4311 immediately so that UDAF officials can follow up. To report sick or dead wild birds, contact the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources office in Springville at 801-491-5678.

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