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Proper Cooking of Poultry Protects against Avian Influenza

Avian Influenza, or “bird flu,” is a virus that can cause a varying amount of disease among birds. The viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, geese, and ducks as well as a variety of other birds. Highly pathogenic avian influenza causes a severe, extremely contagious illness and death among infected birds, and while some strains could be infectious to people, the chance of infected poultry entering the food chain would be extremely low.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ohio Department of Agriculture recommend the proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection avian influenza, as it does against other viruses and bacteria, including *Salmonella* and *E.coli*.

Consumers should practice the following safe food handling and preparation procedures every day:

- Wash hands before and after handling food.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure food has reached proper temperature. Cook poultry to an internal temperature of 165°.
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, fish and their juices away from other foods.
- Wash hands, cutting board, knife, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after cutting raw meats.
- Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water.

Consumers may call the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Industry at 800-282-1955 with questions or concerns, or visit one of these web sites:

State of Ohio Flu Web site – www.ohiopandemicflu.gov

Ohio Department of Agriculture – www.ohioagriculture.gov/avian

U.S. Department of Agriculture – www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/ or www.usda.gov/birdflu

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/

Ohio Poultry Association – www.ohiopoultry.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – www.pandemicflu.gov

World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/No_07_AI_Nov05_en.pdf