



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Assistant State Vet to test poultry at Tanana Valley Fair

Free testing can help protect birds from infectious diseases

July 31, 2006—Fairbanks--Bird owners can be confident they are protecting their flocks by having their poultry tested for infectious diseases at the upcoming Tanana Valley Fair (Aug 4-15). Animals are scheduled to arrive at the fair on August 3, where Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Assistant State Veterinarian Dr. Jay Fuller will offer surveillance testing to owners and poultry producers free of charge.

The possibility that Avian Influenza may enter Alaska with the migratory wild waterfowl and be passed on to domestic poultry has many people worried. "Biosecurity measures are the best way to protect your flock from infectious diseases like Avian Influenza. It is as simple as creating a barrier between your birds and wild birds that could be sources of infection," said DEC State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Gerlach. "The fairs are a perfect opportunity for people to learn how to protect their poultry flocks and pet birds and also take advantage of this free service at one convenient location."

The samples collected by Dr. Fuller will be tested at the State's new Environmental Health Laboratory in Anchorage, with results expected within a week. Information about backyard biosecurity to protect pet birds and flocks from infectious diseases will be available in the poultry exhibition area and at the DEC booth, Space A07 in the Borealis Pavillion. Information can also be obtained from University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension agents. Surveillance testing will be offered at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer as well, where DEC will have a booth August 24 to September 4, 2006.

Poultry producers wishing free surveillance testing at their farm may make arrangements for a scheduled visit by contacting the Office of the State Veterinarian at (907) 375-8200 or by emailing bob_gerlach@dec.state.ak.us

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