

**■ AVIAN,**  
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**Q: How is this HPAI virus similar to other HPAI viruses found across the world?**

**A:** Molecular analysis of the US HPAI H5N2 viruses shows that they are a combination of Asian HPAI viruses with low-pathogenic North American viruses. The HPAI type that has affected the South Dakota flock is an H5N2 type that carries the “H” antigen from highly-pathogenic Asian strains and the “N” from common low-pathogenic North American viruses.

**Q: What bird species have been most commonly affected with HPAI H5N2?**

**A:** Of domestic birds, turkeys have been most commonly affected by these outbreaks across the US, but chickens and a variety of backyard birds have also been identified. No wild bird infections have been detected yet in South Dakota, but in other states, the virus has most often been associated with ducks and geese. Birds of prey such as hawks, falcons, and eagles are also affected, presumably from eating infected waterfowl. While many sources mention pheasants as susceptible to HPAI, no pheasant death losses have been detected in South Dakota; however, a backyard pheasant flock in Washington State was identified as infected in January.

**Q: What is the danger for people working with the affected birds?**

**A:** There is no indication that these HPAI H5N2 avian strains affect people (or other animals). In each outbreak, agriculture officials work closely with state health departments to identify and monitor people who have been in close contact with infected birds. Typically, exposed people are offered preventative antiviral medications and are contacted each day for 10 days to ensure that they are not suffering flu-like symptoms. In other states, non-specific illnesses in some of these people have prompted further testing, but no influenza viruses have been found in any of these individuals to date.

**Q: Are there food safety problems associated with these HPAI outbreaks?**

**A:** No. Affected birds do not enter the food supply. Furthermore, all influenza viruses are easily inactivated by proper cooking techniques.

**Q: How can I protect my backyard flock from infection with these viruses?**

**A:** Owners of backyard free-roaming birds should consider their proximity to places where waterfowl might congregate. If domestic birds can come into contact with waterfowl like ducks and geese, it might be prudent to confine the birds inside. Basic biosecurity protocols such as limiting visitors and vehicle traffic, and cleaning and disinfecting equipment used around other flocks, have increased in importance.

**Q: How can I protect my commercial poultry flock?**

**A:** Flock owners should pay close attention to barn security in terms of excluding wild birds and limiting human traffic into poultry barns. Anyone entering barns should adhere to strict policies regarding changing clothes and boots prior to entry. Vehicle and foot traffic should be closely controlled, as tires, boots or clothing that have had contact with wild bird areas are a potential route of entry for a HPAI virus into a barn.

**Q: Who should I contact if I suspect HPAI?**

**A:** If you notice unexplained death loss in your birds, contact your veterinarian or the South Dakota Animal Industry Board at 605.773.3321 as soon as possible.

For more information, contact Dr. Daly, or the South Dakota Animal Industry Board at 605.773.3321

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**■ DRY APRIL,**  
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because of the dry conditions.

Edwards suggested this may be a conservative estimate, as wildland fire activity continues in the western counties, an area that is not included in the expansion of drought in the drought outlook map.

“Wildland fire is a complicated indicator of drought”, Edwards said.

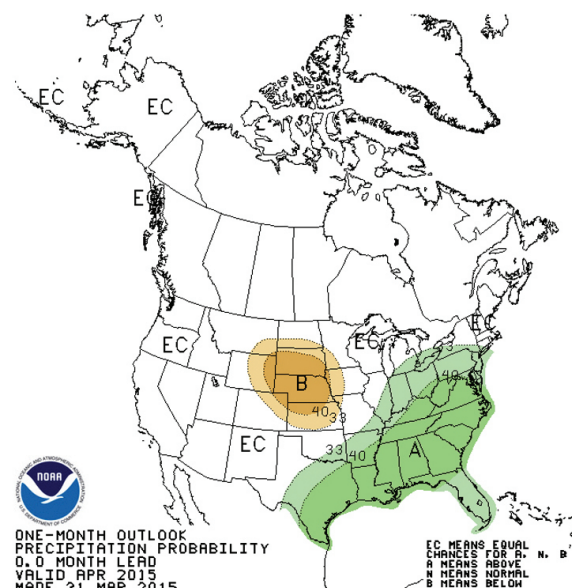
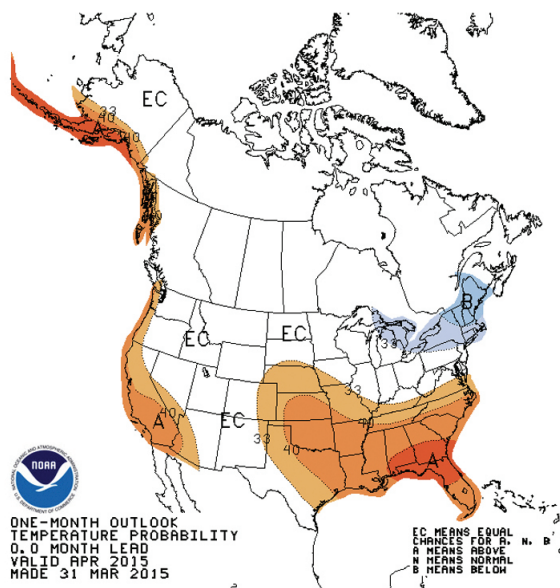
Toledy said drought conditions in the state are likely to get worse before they get better this spring. “Now is the time to think about how to conserve moisture on the farm, and consider chemical and fertilizer application plans with the dry climate outlook,” he said.

Reducing tillage and planting rates may be some other considerations.

He added that the long-range outlooks beyond April are still a little mixed, but currently offer a bit more hope for precipitation.

Throughout the 2015 growing season, SDSU Extension will provide climate updates.

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