

## Avian Flu Outbreak Among Chickens—What This Disaster Can Tell Us About Our Food Production

Three large egg-producing states in the US are in the midst of an avian flu outbreak. Iowa—where about 20 percent of all US eggs are produced—declared a state of emergency on May 1.<sup>1</sup>

Minnesota and Wisconsin declared states of emergency last month, and dozens of countries have imposed partial or total bans on US poultry.

It's estimated that 25 percent of all chickens in Iowa have been infected,<sup>2</sup> and millions of chickens and turkeys in the three states have already been killed in an effort to contain the disease.

### CAFOs Are a Constant Threat to Health

This outbreak is really not surprising. In fact, it's exactly what you can expect when you dramatically disrupt the natural order of things, and produce food under wholly unnatural circumstances.

[Confined animal feeding operations](#) (CAFOs) are major warehouse-style growing facilities where animals are crowded together by the thousands, or in the case of chickens, tens of thousands.

These animals are fed a completely unnatural diet of [glyphosate-containing genetically engineered \(GE\) grains mixed with antibiotics](#)—a surefire recipe for drug resistance and out-of-control spread of disease, both among animals and humans.

This problem is certainly not restricted to chicken CAFOs. The same applies to cattle and hog farms as well. As an example, hog farmers are six times more likely than the general population to carry drug-resistant Staph bacteria.<sup>4</sup>

In this case, two different strains of avian influenza have been detected in chicken CAFOs across the US. The H5N2 strain is circulating in Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin, while the H5N8 strain is found in California and in Idaho.

And, while there are safeguards in place to contain deadly disease outbreaks from spreading, poultry veterinarians note that those strategies appear to have failed, as the influenza managed to spread across 14 states in five months.