

# Jennie-O turkey farm in Minnesota hit by deadly bird flu

April 8 2015, by Steve Karnowski

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A ninth Minnesota turkey farm has been hit by a form of bird flu that's deadly to poultry, this time in a large Jennie-O-Turkey Store operation that has 310,000 turkeys, federal authorities and company officials said Wednesday.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said tests confirmed it was the same highly pathogenic H5N2 strain of avian influenza that infected eight other farms in Minnesota, the country's top turkey-producing state. Those farms have lost about 373,000 turkeys to the outbreaks between the disease itself and birds that were killed to prevent the disease from spreading.

Minnesota Board of Animal health spokeswoman Erica Gunderson said the Meeker County operation has 10 barns on various sites. She didn't know immediately how many birds were in the infected barn, but said [state officials](#) would be working to determine what to do with the turkeys in the other barns.

Jennie-O, a division of Hormel, said on its website that it's the first company-owned facility to test positive for the virus. Three previous confirmed cases connected to Jennie-O were flocks that were being raised by independent contractors. Those were in Kandiyohi, Stearns and Lac qui Parle counties.

Officials say the risk to the public is low and there's no danger to the food supply.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar met Wednesday with state Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson, state Health Commissioner Ed Ehlinger and other state and [federal officials](#) to discuss the importance of a coordinated response to contain the disease and to protect the state's turkey industry. She plans to meet with turkey growers in southwestern Minnesota later this week.

The Minnesota Democrat sent a letter Wednesday to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, thanking his agency for its quick response and urging him to ensure that funding keeps flowing for control efforts and to compensate producers for their losses.

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