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NEBRASKA CANCELS POULTRY EVENTS IN EFFORT TO PREVENT SPREAD OF HPAI *Poultry shows, swap meets, exotic sales and live bird auctions cancelled until January 1, 2016*

LINCOLN – After consultation with Nebraska Extension and poultry industry leaders, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) today cancelled all poultry events across Nebraska through January 1, 2016. The ban will include all events where birds are co-mingled including: local and county fairs and festivals, the Nebraska State Fair, Ak-Sar-Ben, swap meets, exotic sales and live bird auctions in an effort to prevent the spread of highly pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza (HPAI).

“The decision to cancel poultry events was made in an effort to protect the physical and economic health of Nebraska’s poultry sector. It is a difficult decision as I know youth and adults would soon be exhibiting their projects at local fairs,” said NDA Director Greg Ibach. “As a parent of past 4-H and FFA members, I understand the time and commitment that our youth put into their projects and can understand the disappointment they may feel in not being able to exhibit their projects this year. This decision was not made lightly, but is necessary to assure we do everything possible to protect our collective poultry flock from further spread of the virus.”

Ibach applauds Nebraska Extension for working to identify options for youth enrolled in poultry projects to showcase their learning and participate in fairs in other ways than having their birds present.

Ibach continues to ask Nebraska poultry producers, large and small, to monitor their flocks for symptoms of the virus and notify NDA immediately if they suspect any problems. All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard enthusiasts, should prevent contact between their birds and other birds including wild birds, and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to state/federal officials, either through NDA by calling 1-877-800-4080 or through USDA’s toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

Additional information about HPAI can be found online at www.nda.nebraska.gov.

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