

# The Farm Report



## Helping Backyard Bird Owners Raise Healthy Flocks

(NAPSA)—A unique calendar could help many of America's backyard poultry owners keep their birds safe from diseases such as avian influenza.

The free 2010 calendar is offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). As hobby farming and raising poultry grow in popularity, experts say it's become increasingly important for poultry owners to protect their birds from diseases. In addition to featuring vivid photos of poultry and wild birds—along with text in English and Spanish—USDA's 2010 Backyard Biosecurity calendar provides useful tips and information to help owners do just that.

Avian influenza (AI) viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese and guinea fowl, as well as other birds. By practicing good hygiene when taking care of birds and poultry, owners can reduce the risk of disease-causing germs going to or coming from their farm or home.

Such things as thoroughly washing your hands before entering your bird area and before working with your birds, and cleaning and disinfecting equipment that comes in contact with your birds, will help keep disease away.

The calendar has information on spotting signs of sick birds and



### A new calendar could help in the fight against avian influenza.

photos of birds with AI. Avian influenza can strike poultry quickly, and knowing what to look for will help bird owners: A lack of energy and appetite; decreased egg production or soft-shelled or misshapen eggs; swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles and hocks; purple discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs; nasal discharge; coughing and sneezing; stumbling or diarrhea could indicate AI.

To protect the U.S. poultry population, USDA quarantines and tests live birds imported into the United States to ensure that they do not have any foreign animal diseases.

The Backyard Biosecurity calendar is available free of charge. Interested poultry owners can order online at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.