University of Minnesota Extension Takes a Multi-State Approach to Avian Influenza Education & Outreach for Families

ST. PAUL, Minn. (6/26/2015)—In response to the recent Avian Influenza outbreak, University of Minnesota Extension launched a multi-state approach to providing research-based information and resources to families.

“By leveraging our resources and strategically sharing information with families throughout South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa we are able to provide daily updates and recommendations,” said Karen Shirer, Associate Dean for the Center for Family Development University of Minnesota Extension.

Together, extension staff from the three Land Grant Universities will provide families with information on everything from food safety education and stretching food dollars as the cost of eggs and poultry increases to implementing strategies to manage a family’s finances and stress during tough times.

“Avian Influenza has had a very real impact on families. While our Minnesota Extension counterparts are working to address producer issues, this group will focus on the families struggling with the human challenges brought on by Avian Influenza,” Shirer explained. “Whether that is ensuring families are implementing the proper food safety techniques when preparing eggs and poultry, the loss of employment or dealing with seeing their food budget increase, as eggs, which are traditionally an inexpensive protein source, have more than doubled in price.”

#AVIANFLUIMPACT

Sharing of resources and information between university extension groups is not a new concept: outreach has been the focus of extension since its establishment within Land Grant universities across the U.S. more than a century ago. And, in this case, Shirer says collaboration is imperative. “Alone, we simply do not have the staff or resources to ensure families receive all the information they need.”

The outreach effort will include a strong social media presence, public relations campaign and online resources. To learn more, visit z.umn.edu/afimpact or follow #AvianFluImpact on your social media accounts.