

## **“Preparing for Avian Influenza” 2006 Poultry Disease Conference**

### **Issue**

In 2005-2006, avian influenza caught worldwide attention due to constant media publicity, although the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus had not reached North America. While animal health officials and the poultry industry were stepping up to the challenge of fighting the spread of avian influenza, all parties needed to stay updated on proper prevention and response strategies. Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service convened a conference to allow participants to learn about avian flu from the nation's leading animal health experts and discuss their roles in the event of an avian influenza outbreak.

### **Event**

The Poultry Disease Conference: Preparing for Avian Influenza, convened March 30, 2006, at the OSU - Tulsa campus. The conference addressed topics such as current avian influenza updates, proper bio-security measures, diagnosis, mass euthanasia, carcass disposal and emergency preparation/response to a disease outbreak.

Experts were brought together from OSU; University of Delaware; University of Maryland; University of Arkansas; National Veterinary Services Laboratory of the U.S.D.A.; Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry; and Oklahoma State Department of Human Health. A highlight of the conference was a presentation about the worldwide status of the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian flu virus by Dennis Senne, a leading avian influenza expert. Senne is a poultry specialist for the NVSL and was involved in the identification and characterization of the first H5N1 virus isolated from chickens in Hong Kong in 1997.

### **Impact**

The conference was timely and well-attended. OSU Cooperative Extension Service was one of the first to hold an avian influenza conference addressing the animal health issue rather than the possible human pandemic. The conference reached approximately 150 state and federal professionals, educators, animal health officials, veterinarians and poultry industry representatives who deal with animal health and waste management.

### **Source of Funding**

Joint sponsors for the conference were OSU Cooperative Extension Service, the Poultry Federation, Brown Bear Corporation and the OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

### **Contact**

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