

WSGW RADIO PRESENTATION

“Take Action to Prevent Salmonella Illness from Contact with Live Poultry”

February 13, 2018

This month the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services sent out an annual notice to Michigan feed and agricultural stores that sell baby live poultry due to risk of human Salmonella infections from contact with live poultry including chicks, chickens, ducklings, ducks, geese, and turkeys.

Feed stores can play an important role in educating the public on how to safely enjoy owning birds.

All poultry, even those that appear healthy and clean, have the potential to carry Salmonella which can cause illness in humans. These germs are shed in their droppings and can contaminate a bird's body and anything in the area where they are housed. People can become infected when they come in contact with birds, litter, cages, feed and water dishes, and other items or equipment.

Salmonella infection in people may cause fever, diarrhea and stomach cramps, and some may develop more severe complications.

As raising backyard birds has increased in popularity, more people are having contact with chickens and ducks and may not know about the risk of Salmonella infection. As a result, outbreaks of human illness linked to handling live poultry purchased from feed stores and mail-order hatcheries are on the rise. In the U.S., 2017 was another record year for human Salmonella illnesses linked to contact with live poultry in backyard flocks, with the Centers for Disease Control reporting ten separate outbreaks involving 48 states and resulting in 1,120 illnesses, 249 hospitalizations and 1 death. Michigan was among the states with the most cases nationally.

Feed store owners and employees can do some simple things to protect themselves and their customers:

- Offer hand washing stations or hand sanitizer next to poultry display areas, encourage staff and customers to wash hands right after leaving the display area.
- Keep birds out of reach of customers, especially children.
- Discourage eating and drinking around live birds.
- Educate customers to keep poultry in their own safe and warm living space, outside of their house.

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