

US farms on alert as several cases of bird flu found

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The US Department of Agriculture said Monday it had detected bird flu in two more farms after a first case came to light last week, putting the industry on guard.

After having already detected the virus in [wild birds](#) on several occasions on the east coast in recent weeks, the department said on February 9 it had found the disease in [birds](#) on a [farm](#) in Indiana.

On Monday it reported that two more farms had been affected, in Kentucky and Virginia.

The authorities have placed the sites in quarantine and the birds will be slaughtered to avoid possible spread throughout the country, which according to the USDA is the largest producer of poultry in the world.

No cases have been detected in humans so far and the disease does not present an immediate public health threat, authorities said.

But the [agricultural sector](#) will remain vigilant to avoid a repeat of the 2015 avian flu outbreak, which affected 211 farms in 15 states, from California to Indiana.

During that flare-up, nearly 50 million birds were killed and their carcasses destroyed, and several countries suspended US imports. The department put total losses at about \$3.3 billion.

After the first case was discovered in Indiana last week, Mexico and China moved quickly to limit imports from that state.

A spokesman for the National Chicken Council said in an email to AFP that any detection of the virus was "worrying" but said the control and monitoring program put in place by the authorities is "the most robust in the world."

Tyson Foods, one of the largest chicken producers in the United States, said when it released its results on February 7 that it had already increased [preventative measures](#), in particular on the east coast of the

United States.

The group has limited the number of visits to its farms and increased cleaning time for vehicles traveling to them.

Europe is already experiencing an avian flu outbreak, with more than 18 million birds slaughtered in Italy and around three million in France since the first cases detected in farms at the end of November.

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