

Quarantine Actions in Arizona, Nevada, and Texas

In addition to the detections of END in California, the disease was also confirmed in backyard poultry on premises in three other States: In Nevada on January 16, 2003; in Arizona on February 4, 2003; and in Texas on April 9, 2003. Shortly after each of those confirmations, we responded by publishing an interim rule amending § 82.3(c) to designate areas surrounding the affected premises as quarantined areas. Specifically:

- In interim rule effective January 17, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on January 24, 2003 (68 FR 3375–3376, Docket No. 02–117–3), we designated all of Clark County, NV, and a portion of Nye County, NV, as a quarantined area;

- In an interim rule effective February 10, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on February 14, 2003 (68 FR 7412–7413, Docket No. 02–117–4), we designated La Paz and Yuma Counties, AZ, and a portion of Mohave County, AZ, as a quarantined area; and

- In an interim rule effective April 10, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on April 16, 2003 (68 FR 18531–18532, Docket No. 02–117–5), we designated El Paso and Hudspeth Counties, TX, and Dona Ana, Luna, and Otero Counties, NM, as a quarantined area.

As was the case with California, the areas Arizona, Nevada, and Texas that were quarantined in those interim rules encompassed each area where poultry infected with END were located and a surrounding geographical area deemed by epidemiological evaluation to be sufficient to contain all birds or poultry known to be infected with or exposed to END, as provided for by the regulations in § 82.3(a).

Previous Reductions in Quarantined Areas

After evaluating the results of extensive investigations conducted in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas, APHIS epidemiologists determined it was possible to reduce the size of the quarantined areas in those

States by eliminating areas in which END had not been found. Thus, in an interim rule effective May 14, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on May 19, 2003 (69 FR 26986–26988, Docket No. 02–117–6), we amended the regulations in § 82.3(c) by reducing the size of the quarantined areas in Nevada and Arizona, leaving only portions of La Paz County, AZ, and Clark County, NV, as quarantined areas in those States. Similarly, in another interim rule effective June 5, 2003, and published in the **Federal Register** on June 11, 2003 (69 FR 34779–34781, Docket No. 02–117–8), we amended the regulations in § 82.3(c) by reducing the size of the quarantined areas in Texas and eliminating the quarantined areas in New Mexico, leaving only a portion of El Paso County, TX, as a quarantined area in that State.

Additional Reductions in Quarantined Areas

In this interim rule, we are reducing the size of the quarantined area in California and eliminating the last remaining quarantined areas in Arizona, Nevada, and Texas. Except for portions of San Diego County, the areas we are removing from quarantine in California are areas in which END has not been found after extensive surveillance. Our actions with respect to La Paz County, AZ, Clark County, NV, El Paso County, TX, and the remaining portions of San Diego County, CA—areas that had, at one time, contained infected premises—are based upon our determination that those areas meet the criteria contained in § 82.14 of the regulations for release from quarantine. Our basis for these actions is discussed in greater detail below.

Areas in Which END Has Not Been Found

No END-positive premises were detected in Imperial, Orange, or Santa Barbara Counties, CA, or in large areas of Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties, CA. Large parts of these areas are made up of public lands or mountains, desert, or other largely

uninhabited terrain. Intense surveillance and testing of both noncommercial and commercial poultry premises was carried out in these areas, also known as the surveillance zone, and resulted in no END-positive premises being detected.

Noncommercial premises. An inventory of at-risk noncommercial premises was developed for the areas targeted for quarantine release. In addition to information previously collected through eradication activities, sources of information included local animal control authorities, local law enforcement, county agricultural officials, extension personnel, and animal welfare workers.

Surveillance efforts were concentrated in areas that had at-risk premises. An at-risk premises was defined as a premises inhabited by poultry, ratites, or an aviary. Within this population, premises considered highest risk were targeted for sampling. High risk premises were defined as any premises with any galliform birds (chickens, turkeys, pheasant, quail, partridge, guinea fowl, pea fowl, *etc.*), columbiform birds (pigeons, doves), or anseriform birds (ducks, geese, swans). Other factors considered to indicate high risk were multiple owners on the same premises, premises with sick or dead birds, history of movement of birds, and possible contact with an infected premises.

The sampling period was concentrated from March through June 2003, but began as early as January 2003. All sampling of the surveillance zone was completed by early July 2003. At least 6,917 premises with birds were identified in the surveillance zone. The true total number of premises with birds in the surveillance zone is not known, but efforts were made to identify the areas most likely to have at-risk premises.

Overall, a total of 1,811 at-risk premises were sampled from a population of 3,386 at-risk premises in the surveillance zone. Over 23,600 birds were sampled and tested for END virus. None of the samples yielded a positive result.

TABLE 1.—AT-RISK NONCOMMERCIAL PREMISES SAMPLED BY COUNTY IN CALIFORNIA

County	Number of premises sampled	County	Number of premises sampled
Imperial	182	San Bernardino	124
Kern	15	San Diego	343
Los Angeles	39	Santa Barbara	349
Orange	256	Ventura	274
Riverside	229		