

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

STATE OF ALASKA

PO BOX 112000,
Juneau, Alaska, 99811-2000
PHONE: (907) 465-4652
FAX: (907) 465-3390



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Richard F Schmitz, Communications Special Assistant
Office: (907) 465 4640
Mobile: (907) 321 0040

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POINT MACKENZIE CORRECTIONAL FARM TO MONITOR FOR AVIAN FLU

JUNEAU – A cadre of staff at the Point MacKenzie Correctional Farm has been trained to monitor for evidence of the H5N1 avian flu virus (bird flu) in both migrating birds and domestic poultry.

“It’s important to be proactive. Thousands of migrating birds use our barley fields as a rest stop each Spring, and we also have the state’s largest domestic poultry operation in the state,” said Point Mackenzie superintendent Joe Schmidt.

Schmidt and key staff members met with state veterinarian Dr. Robert Gerlach to establish monitoring procedures in both bird populations. These procedures include field inspection for deceased wild birds and live testing of domestic poultry.

Point Mackenzie will produce close to 600 chickens and turkeys monthly by summer, Schmidt said. Once processed, the poultry meat is distributed to Wildwood and Spring Creek Correctional Centers for institutional consumption. No poultry products from the facility are distributed to the public.

The correctional farm covers one square mile (640 acres), most of which is prime migratory bird habitat.