

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write to express my concern about the increasing price of eggs in Arizona.

While the average cost for a dozen Grade A large eggs has more than doubled in the past year to reach a national average of \$3.59, prices in Phoenix have reached closer to \$6.^[1] And it's not just Phoenix – similar price spikes are being reported across the state. Eggs are a staple food upon which families rely, and the budgetary impact of this price increase is immediate, particularly for low-income families.

I understand that this price spike is due in large part to a historic outbreak of the avian flu that has affected around 57.83 million birds and has persisted throughout multiple seasons. The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has done important work to detect, monitor, and address these outbreaks. For several reasons, including egg prices and pandemic prevention, it is critical that this current avian flu outbreak be contained and that future outbreaks are mitigated.

To understand and assist your department's work, please provide answers to the following questions:

- What is USDA doing to keep egg costs down without punishing egg farmers?
- What steps is USDA taking to prevent further spread of the avian flu?
- What lessons have been learned in addressing this particular outbreak of the avian flu?
- What forward-thinking programs is USDA prioritizing related to disease prevention?
- Are there any additional resources or authorizations that would be helpful for disease prevention?

I have heard directly from constituents that the heightened price of eggs is impacting their nutritional wellbeing as well as their wallets. Providing relief as soon as possible is a top priority for me, and I look forward to working together to that end.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

^[1] <https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2023/01/06/cheapest-eggs-phoenix-inflation-avian-flu>