



FOR BEEF INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTION ONLY - UPDATED: APRIL 22, 2024

NOTE: This information is current as of April 22, 2024 at 8:00 MST.

This is an evolving issue and information may become out of date quickly.

Emerging Animal Health Issue:

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Dairy Cattle

Key points to date

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) have identified the **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)** virus or **H5N1** in dairy cattle in eight states: Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, New Mexico and Texas.
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI) H5N1 is an emerging disease in dairy cattle and the situation is evolving. There have been no detections in beef herds. The virus has not been identified in bovine animals in Canada.
- Wild migratory birds are believed to be the original source of the virus. Some cases are associated with cattle movements between herds indicating bovine to bovine spread occurs, likely through mechanical means. There is additional evidence of spread from dairy cattle premises back into nearby poultry premises through an unknown route.
- The public health risk of this virus is considered low. One person in Texas has tested positive for H5N1 with a virus that is nearly identical to what has been found in cows and birds in Texas. This person worked with dairy cows presumably infected with H5N1 and would be the first instance of cow-to-human spread of bird flu. Symptoms were mild and the CDC does not believe these developments change the overall H5N1 bird flu human health risk for the general public.¹
- The food supply including beef and milk is safe². Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria and viruses. Milk from sick cattle is diverted from the food supply. Cattle are inspected ante- and post-mortem. Safe food handling and preparation is always important.
- The World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH) does not recommend restrictions on the movement of healthy cattle and their products at this time³. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has import controls in place, including import permits, export certification and veterinary inspection of imported cattle⁴. There are no federal movement restrictions in the United States, but increased biosecurity is recommended, and some states have import restrictions in place⁵.

Information from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Producers can help protect stock and people and prevent the spread of disease by enhancing biosecurity.

- Monitor cattle for clinical signs.
- Report any unusual clinical signs or changes in illness or mortality* rates to veterinarians.
- Minimize contact between cattle and migratory wild birds when feasible. Report dead birds to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative⁶
- Wear farm-specific boots and clothing.
- Limit non-production animal access to farm areas and implement measures to exclude domestic pets (i.e. cats) and wildlife from buildings housing cattle.
- Avoid feeding unpasteurized colostrum or milk to calves.
- Practice biosecurity between caring for ill stock and other animals on the operation. Wear personal-protective equipment when caring for sick animals.
- Limit visitors.

**Note that no mortality has been associated with HPAI in cattle.*

Other

HPAI is a federally reportable disease in any species in Canada, not just poultry. HPAI is an Influenza A virus named for its clinical effects in chickens. The strain identified in dairy cattle is the H5N1, Eurasian lineage goose Guangdong clade 2.3.4.4b which is the same strain and clade that has been affecting wild birds and commercial poultry flocks over the last few years. This strain and clade has spilled over to affect many mammalian species.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is not issuing federal quarantine orders. However, producers should enhance biosecurity measures for cattle moving from affected areas. Incoming animals should be segregated on arrival and monitored for 21 days for unusual clinical signs.

What to watch for

Producers should monitor herds closely for cattle with clinical signs including:

- Decreased herd level milk production
- Reduced appetite/ decreased feed intake
- Thickened, discolored milk
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Dehydration.

Abnormal clinical signs must be reported to your herd veterinarian. Guidance for private veterinarians is available from the CFIA⁷.

The CCA is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to monitor the situation. Updates will be provided as there are further developments.



**Canadian
Cattle
Association**

Head Office

#180, 6815 – 8th Street NE
Calgary, Alberta
T2E 7H7
Phone: (403) 275-8558
Email: contact@cattle.ca

Ottawa Office

#1101, 350 Sparks St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7S8
Phone: (613) 233-9375

Additional resources

- ¹ [Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) U.S. Situation Update and CDC Activities | Avian Influenza \(Flu\)](#)
- ² [Questions and Answers Regarding Milk Safety During Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Outbreaks | FDA](#)
- ³ [High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in Cattle \(woah.org\)](#)
- ⁴ [Requirements for Breeding Cattle Imported from the United States to Canada - Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)
- ⁵ [Livestock Marketing Association \(lmaweb.com\)](#)
- ⁶ [CWHC-RCSF :: Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative - Réseau canadien pour la santé de la faune](#)
- ⁷ [Highly pathogenic avian influenza in cattle: Guidance for private veterinarians - Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)

[Highly pathogenic avian influenza \(HPAI\) in livestock - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](#)