



## Q&A: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cattle

*Note: The information in this document is current as of the date of publication (January 17, 2025). Please note that guidance may change as more information becomes available on how the virus spreads, its impacts on animal and human health, and measures that are most effective in controlling and eradicating this disease.*

### **What is HPAI in dairy cattle?**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a viral disease that primarily impacts poultry. However, in March of 2024, HPAI was detected in dairy cattle in Texas and has since been detected in livestock in several other states. Dairy cattle infected with HPAI have a high rate of disease (but low mortality rate) primarily resulting in fever, decreased milk production, and abnormal milk. HPAI is spreading between dairies in states throughout the country through the movement of cattle, vehicles, and people.

Find out more from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS): [aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-%20influenza/hpai-livestock](https://aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-%20influenza/hpai-livestock).

### **Will my farm be tested for HPAI?**

The USDA issued a [Federal order in December 2024](#) requiring any entity that sends or holds milk for pasteurization such as a dairy farm, a bulk milk transporter, a bulk milk transfer station, or dairy processing facility to provide raw (unpasteurized) milk samples for HPAI testing to the USDA upon request. To comply with this order, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) is participating in the [USDA's National Milk Testing Strategy](#) (NMTS).

Beginning in January 2025, New York State will test raw milk samples collected at every silo containing Grade "A" milk intended for pasteurization at processing facilities receiving Grade "A" bulk raw cow's milk. Sampling and testing will take place on a monthly basis and comes at no cost to dairy farmers or processors. If a detection is found, State inspectors will conduct additional verification sampling and testing, with traceback to the impacted farm if the sample is confirmed positive for HPAI. **Please see the last page of this document for a diagram of New York State's sampling and testing process under the NMTS.**

Additionally, because raw milk permit holders are not included in the NMTS, as their milk is not intended for pasteurization, AGM issued a [Notice and Order requiring mandatory monthly testing for HPAI for raw milk permit holders](#). Pursuant to the Notice and Order, at this time, Department inspectors will collect raw cow's milk samples for HPAI testing from raw milk permit holders during routine monthly inspections, or at other times as deemed necessary by the Department to assist in the detection of HPAI. This monthly sampling and testing will be performed at no cost to raw milk permit holders.

### **What happens if my farm tests positive?**

AGM will: (1) notify the farm; (2) place a **quarantine** restricting animal movement on the premises; and (3) begin an **epidemiologic investigation**, in collaboration with USDA, to determine the source of infection.

A State animal health official (AGM field veterinarian) will visit the farm to answer questions and provide information on available support and resources.



### ***What does a quarantine mean for my farm?***

No cattle will be permitted to move off the premises during the quarantine period. A veterinarian from AGM or USDA will conduct an epidemiologic investigation to determine the source of infection. In addition, any farms found to be associated with the infected farm, through animal movements or other linkages, will be tested. The information collected from the investigation will be used to learn more about the behavior and transmission characteristics of the virus.

Exceptions may be made for necessary animal movements; however, **all movements** must receive prior approval from the AGM state veterinarian's office. Please note:

- Lactating cattle are **ineligible** for movement.
- Movements of other cattle, including dry cows, calves, and other non-lactating cattle, will be considered based on a risk assessment conducted by an AGM or USDA veterinarian and implementation of an approved biosecurity plan.
- No animals will be allowed to enter livestock markets or other areas where animals congregate for the duration of the quarantine.

### ***How long will the quarantine last?***

A farm may be released from quarantine after a premise has had two consecutive weeks of negative bulk tank test results and one negative hospital and fresh pen test result, concurrent with the second negative bulk tank test. Herds will also need to demonstrate an absence of clinical signs consistent with HPAI for at least two weeks prior to quarantine release.

### ***What happens if my farm is in an infected zone or a surveillance zone?***

If a farm is located within three (3) kilometers of a quarantined farm, it is in the "infected zone." Dairy farms and commercial poultry farms located within the infected zone must be tested weekly for the duration of the quarantine to ensure the virus has not spread. Farms located within 10 kilometers of a quarantined farm are in the "surveillance zone." Farms located within the surveillance zone should enhance their biosecurity practices to protect their animals and their employees.

### ***What is an epidemiologic investigation?***

Animal health officials will ask producers a series of questions to determine the source or infection and if any additional premises are at risk of infection.

### ***What does this mean to farms financially?***

Farms that have animals that test positive for HPAI are permitted to ship milk if the milk is intended for pasteurization.

Farms that are HPAI-positive are eligible for Federal financial support to offset the cost of decreased milk production, veterinary costs, biosecurity planning, personal protective equipment, and more.



More information can be found at: [aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock/financial-assistance](https://aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock/financial-assistance).

More information on the Federal Order on milk testing can be found at: [aphis.usda.gov/news/agency-announcements/usda-builds-actions-protect-livestock-public-health-h5n1-avian-influenza](https://aphis.usda.gov/news/agency-announcements/usda-builds-actions-protect-livestock-public-health-h5n1-avian-influenza).

### ***What actions should dairy farms take?***

Farms should implement or begin development of an **enhanced biosecurity plan (EBP)**. Routine biosecurity is not enough to contain disease on infected premises.

More information and online resources can be found at:

- [vet.cornell.edu/animal-health-diagnostic-center/programs/nyschap/secure-food-supply](https://vet.cornell.edu/animal-health-diagnostic-center/programs/nyschap/secure-food-supply)
- [securemilksupply.org](https://securemilksupply.org)
- [nationaldairyfarm.com/dairy-farm-standards/farm-biosecurity/enhanced-biosecurity](https://nationaldairyfarm.com/dairy-farm-standards/farm-biosecurity/enhanced-biosecurity)

### **Farms should:**

**Monitor cow health** and the health status of other animals on the farm (especially farm cats). Raw cow's milk can become HPAI-positive before the cows show clinical signs, so it is possible for your farm to be infected, even if you have seemingly healthy cows. Monitor feed refusals, milk production, and sick cow alerts if you are using health monitoring technology.

**Discontinue consumption of raw milk** by any employees, family members, or animals. HPAI is shed in high concentration in the milk of infected cows and has been shown to be a source of infection to other animals.

Provide additional **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** to your employees. HPAI is a zoonotic disease (meaning that it can infect people) and spreads primarily through close contact with infected animals and/or raw milk. Masks and safety glasses or a face shield can help prevent infection in your milkers. More information is available here: [cdc.gov/bird-flu/hcp/guidance-exposed-persons/symptom-monitoring-hpai.html](https://cdc.gov/bird-flu/hcp/guidance-exposed-persons/symptom-monitoring-hpai.html).

The appropriate local health department will contact infected premises to share resources and provide best practices for human health. More information is available here:

[health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/avian/](https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/avian/) and [health.ny.gov/publications/7300.pdf](https://health.ny.gov/publications/7300.pdf).

### ***My cows are showing signs of HPAI. What should I do?***

If you suspect HPAI in your dairy herd or poultry flock, isolate sick animals and contact AGM at (518) 457-3502 or USDA at 1 (866) 536-7593. Reporting sick cattle and poultry helps prevent the spread of disease to other farms.

