

External Talking Points – HPAI Poultry and Dairy Cattle Response

UPDATED: 01/16/2025

High-Level Messaging

- The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) continues to thoroughly and robustly respond to any detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in both poultry and dairy cows.
 - MDARD is working in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners to quickly and efficiently respond to this disease.
 - This virus does not stop at county or state lines, which is why every Michigander must be aware of this disease and actively take steps to prevent its spread.
 - We must all be on high alert, and this is an all-hands-on-deck approach.
- Michigan was the first state to go above and beyond federal requirements to further protect animal and human health.
 - At the onset, Michigan made HPAI a reportable animal disease for all species, requiring MDARD to be notified of cases within 24 hours.
- Michigan is also one of the first states to participate in the USDA's [National Milk Testing Strategy](#), a federal disease surveillance program initiated by a recent [Federal Order](#) issued on December 6, 2024.
 - The National Milk Testing Strategy will be phased in across the U.S. and is designed to contain and eliminate highly pathogenic avian influenza infections in U.S. dairy cattle to help the country achieve National Disease Elimination status.
- Regardless of the species, biosecurity is the best tool animal owners have to protect against HPAI, which is why MDARD continues to urge producers to tighten up all biosecurity measures to reduce the possibility of introducing the virus and causing additional spread.
 - "Biosecurity" means to take steps to reduce the risk of being exposed to and/or spreading disease.
- MDARD urges producers to closely monitor the health of their animals and to contact their veterinarian immediately if they have any animal health-related concerns and/or for help refining their biosecurity plans.
- The department is thankful for the ongoing and continued partnership between local, state, and federal agencies to address this disease.

Human Health

- On May 22, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced the first case of influenza A (H5) virus identified in a Michigan farmworker who had regular exposure to livestock. The risk to the public remains low.
- The individual worked closely with cows at a dairy known to be impacted by influenza A (H5N1) or HPAI. Cows infected with HPAI still need to be milked for their welfare. The milk from these cows does not enter the food supply.
- The individual got infected material (raw, unpasteurized milk) directly in their eye while milking the animal. The next day, the farmworker reported redness and watery discharge in that eye. The individual recovered two days later and has reported no other signs or symptoms of illness.
- On May 30, 2024, MDHHS announced a second human case of HPAI in a farm worker.

- This farm worker was quickly provided antivirals and recovered from respiratory symptoms.
- These cases demonstrate that use of PPE on farms, including proper eye protection, should be considered on all poultry and dairy farms - especially farms impacted by HPAI.
- Other cases of H5 detections in people have occurred in California, Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.
- Farm workers who have been exposed to impacted animals have been asked to report even mild symptoms. Then, testing for the virus is provided.
- Michigan is grateful for the cooperation of farm owners and workers for participating in monitoring. MDARD, MDHHS, and local health departments continue to work closely with farms and workers to monitor the health of people exposed to ill animals.
- The virus has been circulating in dairy and poultry farms across the U.S. since spring 2024, and state and local public health officials have been closely monitoring for human cases, which can occur sporadically in individuals with close contact to ill animals. Most cases showed mild symptoms, and no evidence of human-to-human transmission has been documented at this time.
- The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to stress the public health risk associated with this disease remains low, and the U.S. food supply remains safe and stable.

Dairy

- In 2024, MDARD has confirmed detections of HPAI in dairy cows in 12 counties for a total of 30 herds: Allegan (1), Barry (1), Calhoun (1), Clinton (6), Gratiot (6), Ingham (1), Ionia (5), Isabella (2), Montcalm (2), Ottawa (2), Shiawassee (1), and Van Buren (2).
 - Also in 2024, one recovering herd in Missaukee County was identified through surveillance testing.
- These ongoing detections underscore the importance of adhering to strict biosecurity, limiting or stopping non-essential visitors to the farm including tours and school trips, vigilantly monitoring animal health, working with a veterinarian, and testing any suspected cases.
- As cattle producers continue to monitor the health of their animals, please watch for signs such as decreased lactation, low appetite, abnormal milk, and other symptoms.
- If these symptoms are noticed, producers should call their veterinarians immediately, who will then assess the animals to determine the next appropriate steps to take.
- As MDARD urges producers to monitor their herds for these signs, the department fully expects this pattern of reporting and testing to continue, leading to the potential for more cases to be identified in the future.
- The more testing that is done, the more we can learn about this virus and better guidance for our farmers can be developed.
- MDARD will continue to share and provide updates with the latest information available online at www.michigan.gov/birdflu.

HPAI Dairy Surveillance Program

- To protect animal health and public health, Michigan was one of the first states to participate in the USDA's [National Milk Testing Strategy](#); testing for this surveillance program began in Michigan in December 2024.
 - Milk samples will be collected and tested monthly.
 - If an HPAI-infected dairy is detected, the premises will be placed under quarantine to prevent disease spread, and MDARD will work with producers and their herd veterinarian to help them achieve unaffected status.

Poultry

- In 2025, there are two confirmed detections of HPAI in commercial poultry flocks from Ottawa County and two detections in backyard flocks from Oakland and Wayne counties.
 - In 2024, there were 13 confirmed detections of HPAI in poultry flocks from five counties: Gratiot, Ionia, Jackson, Newaygo, and Ottawa. All were in commercial poultry facilities except two detections in backyard flocks from Ionia and Jackson counties.
 - This is the first case of HPAI in Wayne County since the virus was first detected in Michigan in 2022.
- HPAI has been circulating in Michigan poultry since February 2022.
- With HPAI continuing to be detected in Michigan, it's critical for farmers and backyard poultry owners to take every action possible to protect their flocks.
- Domestic poultry raised outdoors have a much greater risk of being exposed to diseases like avian influenza because they are more likely to interact with wild birds that could carry the disease.
- Poultry owners should watch for multiple sudden deaths in the flock, a drop in egg production, significant decrease in water consumption, diarrhea, sneezing/coughing, or an increase in sick birds within their flocks; and immediately contact MDARD.
- If avian influenza is **suspected in domestic birds**, contact MDARD **immediately** at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (after-hours).
- Anyone can report avian influenza; you do not have to be a veterinarian.

FLOCK watch



KNOW THE SIGNS OF HPAI:



Low energy or appetite



Diarrhea



Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge



Reduced egg production



Sudden death in multiple birds