



**Department
of Health**

Avian Influenza on Dairy Farms: Keeping Workers Safe

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Division of Epidemiology**

Purpose

Provide background information to dairy farm owners and operators about an avian influenza outbreak in cattle and how it might affect workers on dairy farms.

Explain steps you can take now to keep your workers safe.

Explain how public health will work with you to protect human health if your cattle test positive for avian influenza.

Avian Influenza Background

Avian Influenza

Also known as:

- Bird flu
- H5N1
- Highly pathogenic avian influenza
- “High path” avian influenza
- HPAI

Avian Influenza Outbreak

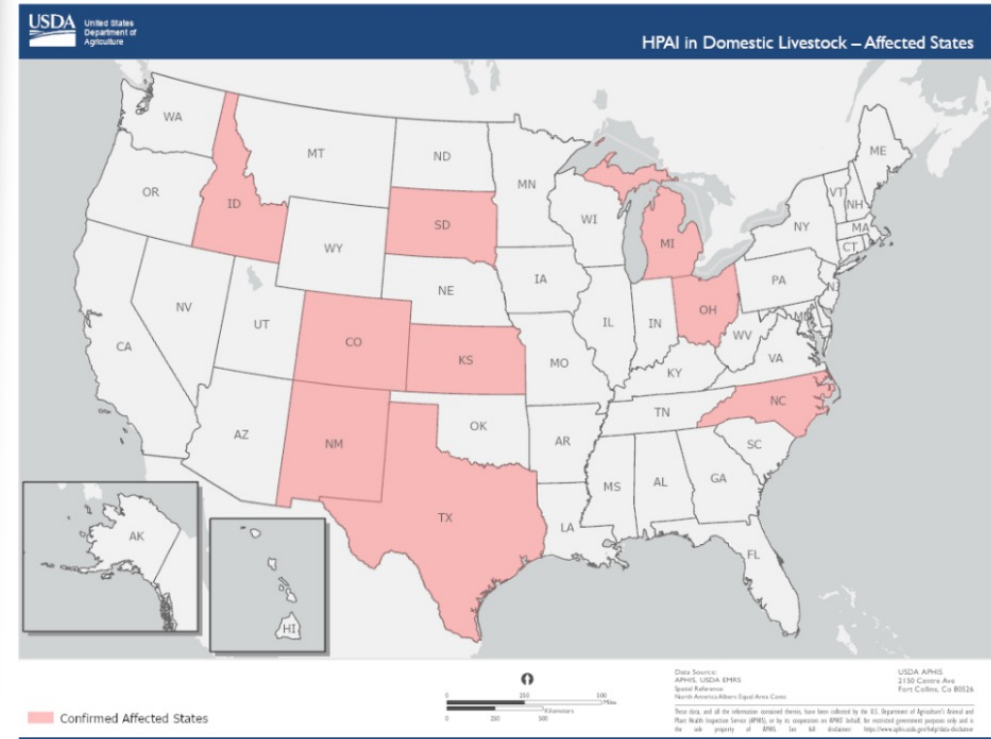
Avian influenza has been spreading among wild birds, poultry and some mammals in the United States since 2022.

During 2024, the outbreak spread to dairy cattle:

- Detected on dairy farms in 12 states
- Not yet detected in New York State (as of the date of this presentation)

New York State Department of Health is monitoring this outbreak because of the potential risk to people.

- Rare animal-to-person spread has occurred
- Potential for person-to-person spread is a concern



Human Cases

Humans can be infected with avian influenza.

In the United States, as of **July 3, 2024**, there have been **four** confirmed cases of avian influenza in dairy workers in 2024:

- Three individuals had eye inflammation and redness (conjunctivitis); one individual had a cough and watery eyes.
- All four individuals made full recoveries

There was a human case in 2022 in an individual working with poultry; the only symptom was fatigue.

We don't yet know the full spectrum of possible human illness with this virus.

**How can you
keep your workers safe?**

Education is Key!

Education is Key

Educate your workers about avian influenza, including:

- Overview of the outbreak
- Signs of avian influenza in cattle and what to do if they see those signs
 - Sudden drop in feed intake, marked drop in herd level milk production, abnormal looking milk, respiratory signs, low-grade fevers
- How avian influenza is spread
- The risks of drinking and coming into contact with raw milk
- New developments in the outbreak

Workers could be more likely to take protective measures if they understand *why* those protective measures are needed.

Education is Key

Teach workers to protect their health while working:

- Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose, or mouth, and avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum where animals are present.



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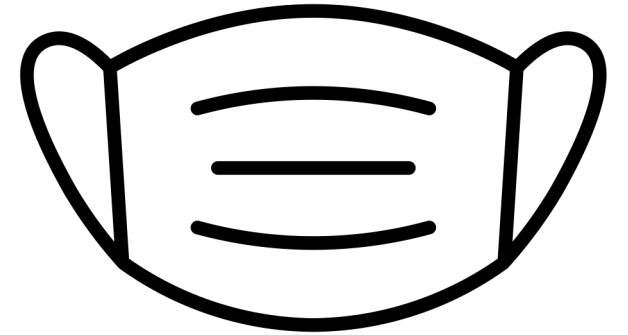
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- Never consume raw milk



Education is Key

Teach workers to protect their health while working:

- Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose, or mouth, and avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum where animals are present.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (and ideally dry them with a disposable towel)
- Never consume raw milk
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when appropriate.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**Wearing PPE is recommended
when working closely with:**

- Sick or dead animals
- Feces from sick animals
- Milk from sick animals
- Surfaces and items (e.g., milking units) contaminated with avian influenza virus

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. Fluid-resistant coveralls

2. Waterproof apron, if needed for job task

3. NIOSH Approved® Respirator (e.g., N95® filtering facepiece respirator or elastomeric half mask respirator)

4. Properly-fitted unvented *or* indirectly vented safety goggles or face shield

5. Head cover or hair cover

6. Gloves

7. Boots

Wash hands with soap and water, then put on PPE in this order:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-131/pdfs/2010-131.pdf>

Source: CDC

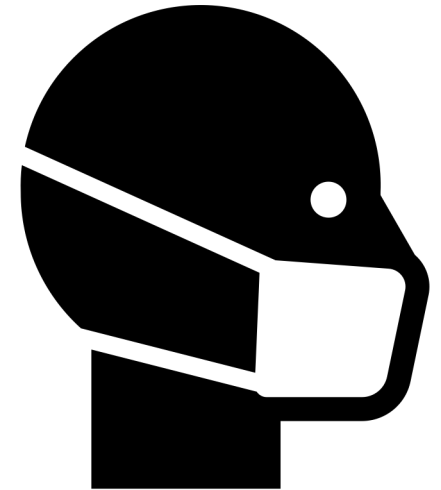
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-131/pdfs/2010-131.pdf>



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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Consider having a supply of PPE in case signs of infection develop in your herd
- Consider making PPE available for farm workers who want additional protective measures when working with healthy animals
- Ensure that your workers are trained to use PPE properly
- The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health may be able to help with obtaining PPE, training workers to use PPE properly and fit testing workers for respirators



Seasonal Flu Vaccine

Encourage seasonal flu vaccinations for your workers

- Does not prevent avian influenza infection; however:
- Reduces the need for testing
- Decreases worker absences due to illness
- Reduces the risk of an individual becoming infected with avian influenza and human influenza viruses at the same time

What happens if your cattle test positive for avian influenza?

Roles

Human Health

Local Health Departments

- **Monitoring of exposed persons for symptoms**
- **Coordinating testing for people with symptoms**

New York State Department of Health

- **Laboratory testing for avian influenza in people**
- **Provide guidance to local health departments**

Animal Health

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

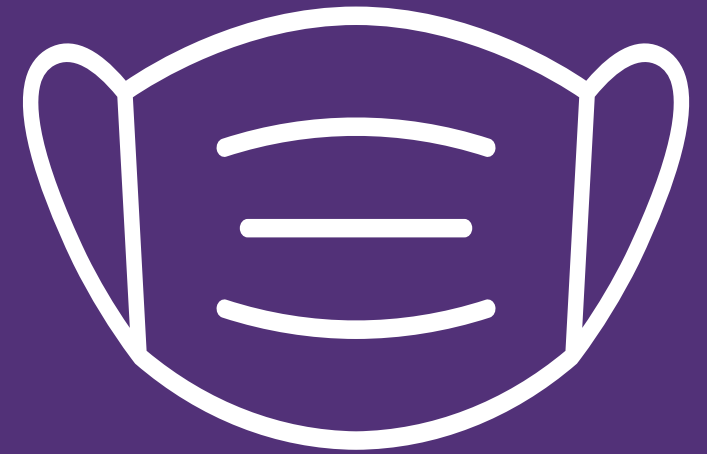
- **Animal/farm quarantines**
- **Farm biosecurity**
- **Raw milk handling and disposal**

If a Cow Tests Positive:

Symptom Monitoring



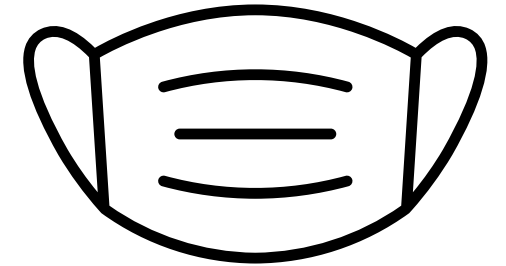
Infection Prevention



If a cow tests positive

Your local health department will be a resource to keep your workers healthy by:

- Reviewing PPE recommendations
- Identifying resources to help you obtain PPE and ensuring your workers know how to use it
- Possibly placing emphasis on eye protection, because of previous cases of conjunctivitis



If a Cow Tests Positive

Your local health department will work with you to identify people who should be considered to have been exposed to ill cattle.

They will monitor those people for symptoms of avian influenza.

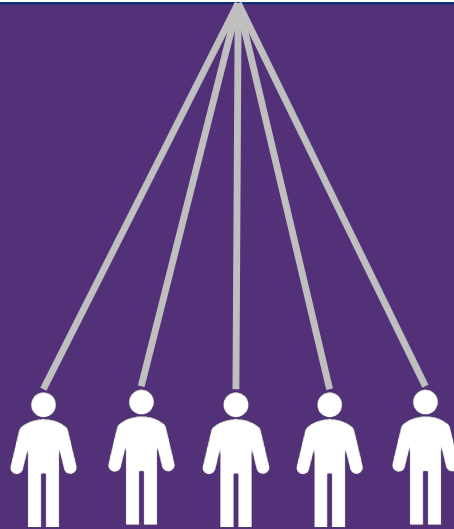
Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Diarrhea

How Does Symptom Monitoring Work?



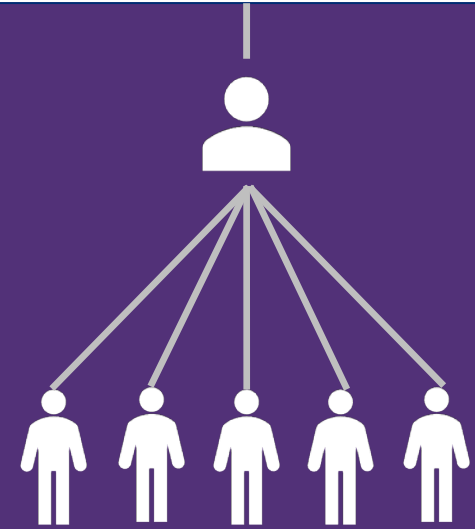
Local Health Department



Individual reporting

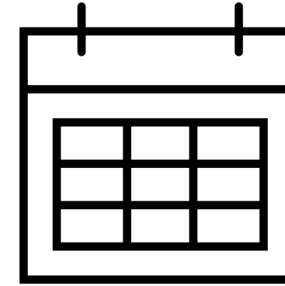
or

Local Health Department



Reporting through farm operator

How Does Symptom Monitoring Work?



- **Monitoring starts:**
At First Exposure
- **Monitoring ends:**
Ten days after last exposure
- If workers continue to work with infected cattle, they will likely need to be monitored for multiple weeks.

If a Person Develops Symptoms:

- Your local health department will help that person get tested for avian influenza and other common causes of respiratory illness
- Testing is available to anyone, regardless of whether they have health insurance. There is no charge for testing done at the New York State public health laboratory
- The test consists of nose and throat swabs and possibly an eye swab (on the inner surface of the lower eyelid), if the person has eye redness
- Medication to treat avian influenza will be offered while waiting for test results

If a Person Tests Positive:

- They will be offered medication to treat their illness, regardless of whether they have health insurance
- Your local health department will help make sure the person does not expose others while they are recovering
- Any person who had close contact with the ill individual will be offered medication to prevent them from becoming ill as well (chemoprophylaxis)

Our Partners

New York State
Local Health
Departments



Bassett Healthcare Network
New York Center for Agricultural
Medicine and Health



Agriculture
and Markets

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops

Resources

PPE Product Advice:



necenter.org/safety-gear

On-farm PPE training and Respiratory Fit Testing:



nycamh.org
Contact: info@nycamh.org

Resources

Avian Influenza Webinar for Native Spanish Speakers:



youtube.com/watch?v=70OcfqhNIDQ

Avian Influenza Trainings for Farms:

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops

Contact:
Daniela Gonzalez Carranza
dg647@cornell.edu

Resources



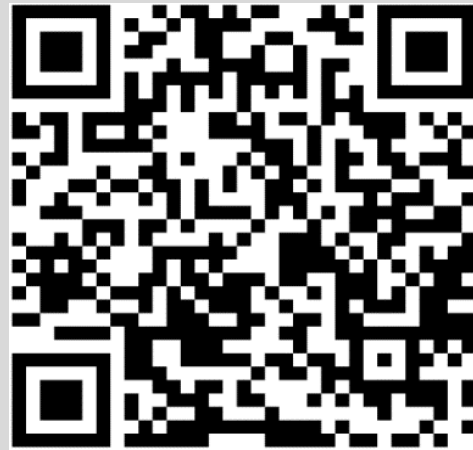
Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Livestock



aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock

For questions
about human
health

Contact Your Local
Health Department:



nysacho.org/directory

Visit the NYSDOH
Website:



[health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/
influenza/avian/status](https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/avian/status)



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