



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PO Box 400
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

EDWARD D. WENGRYN
Secretary

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

December 19, 2024

Dear New Jersey Dairy Producers:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks throughout the nation in an ongoing outbreak since 2022. The HPAI virus remains present in wild birds and other wildlife, as well as domestic poultry and livestock in the US.

Over 800 premises in 17 states have documented HPAI in domestic livestock, primarily dairy cattle, after the initial report in March 2024. Over 1300 poultry premises in the country, involving millions of domestic poultry, have had detections since the beginning of this outbreak. There has been a rise in HPAI detections in domestic poultry and dairy cattle, particularly in western states, over the past few months. The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) has also reported over 60 human cases related to individuals who had close contact with infected livestock or poultry.

Transmission of HPAI to dairy cattle is often related to recent movement of livestock such as new acquisition of cattle, shared personnel, vehicles and equipment, multi-species operations, and herds with exposure to infected local wildlife. Farms containing multiple species, particularly cattle and poultry, should uphold biosecurity practices that reduce the risk of disease spreading between animals. Farm staff and visitors should adhere to recommended precautions regarding contact with other animals and follow personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols.

Cattle farms should identify areas of potential improvement in biosecurity, including limiting farm access to essential employees only, cleaning and disinfection of vehicles, implementing strategies for wild bird deterrent, and use of footbaths at barn entryways. Multi-species operations, particularly those with both poultry and ruminants on-site, are encouraged to mitigate areas in which the spread of disease between species may be at risk. Online resources, such as [Secure Milk Supply- Biosecurity – https://securemilksupply.org/milk-producers/biosecurity/](https://securemilksupply.org/milk-producers/biosecurity/), [CFSPH - Biosecurity – https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/biosecurity/](https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/biosecurity/) and [USDA Defend the Flock - https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock) can be utilized to tailor a farm-specific biosecurity plan. It is recommended that producers focus on-farm biosecurity practices to prevent wild bird contact with their poultry and livestock. USDA Wildlife Services (908-735-5654) can assist with wild bird mitigation plans on agricultural premises.

H5N1 bird flu currently has not been detected in dairy cattle or in people in New Jersey, but due to the ongoing outbreaks in other states, New Jersey farm owners and farm workers should be aware of the risks and monitor dairy cattle, domestic poultry, other livestock, farm pets, and farm workers for signs of illness. Clinical signs of H5N1 bird flu in dairy cattle may include decreased appetite, drop in milk production, thickened colostrum-like milk, abnormal feces, dehydration, lethargy, and fever.

PPE has been made available to dairy farmers by the New Jersey Department of Health through Rutgers Cooperative Extension County offices. If you would like to request PPE supplies and/or require additional information, please contact your respective county extension office. County extension office contact information can be found at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/>.

The USDA Federal Order, requiring Influenza A testing in lactating dairy cattle prior to interstate movement, with few exceptions, remains in place. The order in full is available online at [dairy-federal-order.pdf \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/dairy-federal-order.pdf) OR <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dairy-federal-order.pdf>. New Jersey has developed a Voluntary Dairy Herd Health Monitoring Program, available to all dairies in the state. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact Dan Wunderlich (Daniel.Wunderlich@ag.nj.gov) at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Recently the USDA APHIS VS announced its National Milk Testing Strategy, of which all state's will be participating. To learn more, go to [HPAI in Livestock | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-livestock) OR <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-livestock>.

If you suspect HPAI in your livestock, please alert the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at 609-671-6400.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amar Patil", is written over the typed name below.

Amar Patil DVM, MVSc, PhD, Diplomate ACVM
State Veterinarian / Director, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health
P.O. Box 330
Trenton, NJ 08625-0330
Phone: (609) 671-6400