APHIS Updates Guidance on the Interstate Movement of Lactating Dairy Cattle



Cattle Moving Interstate From Unaffected States Do Not Have To Test for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has issued updated guidance related to the April 2024 Federal Order (145.34 KB) that required testing of lactating dairy cattle before they move across State lines.

Effective immediately, lactating dairy cattle moving interstate from States with Unaffected State Status under the National Milk Testing Strategy are no longer required to be tested for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 prior to movement.

View the updated guidance document (366.41 KB).

Key Points

- No testing required for lactating dairy cattle originating from States with Unaffected State Status under the National Milk Testing Strategy.
- Unaffected State Status requires ongoing testing and surveillance activities to confirm the absence of HPAI in the State’s dairy herds.
- This update follows a United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) resolution received in October 2025 and is expected to be widely supported by dairy and State animal health regulatory officials.
- APHIS does not anticipate any impact on trade of cattle or beef/dairy products.

Public Health and Food Safety

The detection of HPAI H5N1 in lactating dairy cattle does not pose a risk to consumer health or compromise the safety of the commercial milk supply. Pasteurization effectively inactivates HPAI virus. Milk from affected animals is diverted or destroyed to prevent entry into the food supply. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to consider the public health risk low.

The Importance of Biosecurity

USDA remains committed to working with State partners to monitor, investigate, and mitigate the spread of HPAI in livestock. This update does not change USDA’s HPAI eradication strategy. Biosecurity is still key to mitigating the risk of disease introduction or spread between premises.

APHIS recommends enhanced biosecurity measures for all dairy farms. Producers should immediately report any livestock with clinical signs, or any unusual sick or

dead wildlife, to their State veterinarian.

Print