



Recommendations to Minimize Influenza Transmission at Dairy Cattle Livestock Exhibitions

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Background

Since late March 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state veterinary and public health officials have been investigating the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza in dairy cows. This disease is deadly to domestic poultry. While it causes less severe illness in cattle than in poultry, the disease remains of concern for all livestock and also for humans who come into contact with infected animals.

USDA has identified spread of this disease between cows within the same herd, spread from cows to poultry, spread between dairies associated with cattle movements, and cows without clinical signs that have tested positive.

Fairs and exhibitions provide an opportunity for learning and to showcase the hard work invested in agricultural animals. Unfortunately, these exhibitions also provide an opportunity for illness to spread among animals from multiple herds. Appropriate measures should be taken to minimize the potential for spread of influenza. It may not be possible to prevent all transmission of influenza viruses at livestock exhibitions. The measures described here are offered for careful consideration depending on the needs of the specific exhibition.

Considerations for State Animal Health Officials

- Coordinate early and often with event organizers and state public health officials.
 - Ensure that all are up to date on animal health reporting requirements.
 - Establish a communication plan for human illnesses with state and local public health.
- Consider restricting exhibition of lactating dairy cattle, based on local circumstances.
- Consider establishing testing requirements for non-lactating cattle, based on local circumstances.
- Develop a plan for exhibition animals that develop clinical signs consistent with influenza. The plan should:
 - Ensure that testing for animals that develop clinical signs of influenza is conducted.
 - Outline movement restrictions if an animal tests positive during the exhibition.
 - Lactating dairy cows are not eligible move interstate for 30 days from the most recent collection of any sample that tests positive, although movement under specific circumstances may be discussed and agreed upon with the respective state animal health officials and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
 - Set expectations for distributing test results to the appropriate animal health and public health agencies, as well as the exhibitor/owner.

- Consider pre-drafting communications talking points in the event of a highly pathogenic avian influenza detection at the exhibition.
- Review federal requirements and communicate movement and testing requirements to event organizers and exhibitors.
 - Prior to interstate movement, lactating dairy cattle are required to receive a negative test for Influenza A virus at an approved [National Animal Health Laboratory Network \(NAHLN\)](#) laboratory using a NAHLN approved assay.
 - The interstate movement of all lactating dairy cattle must be accompanied by a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI).
 - Animals moving interstate to an exhibition, show, or sale must have a negative test result from samples collected within 7 days of movement. These animals may travel to their home herd using the same negative test result provided the exhibition, show, or sale does not exceed 10 days of length.
- Consider adopting the federal testing and movement requirements described above for intrastate movements of lactating dairy cattle for exhibitions or shows.

Recommendations for Exhibition Organizers and Exhibitors

For Exhibition Organizers

Before the Event

- Collect sufficient contact information (i.e., email addresses and cell phone numbers) from all exhibitors to be able to rapidly communicate procedural changes, requests for information, or incidents associated with the exhibition.
- Collect contact information for state animal health officials and local or state public health officials to ensure they can be reached if they are needed during an event.
- Ensure that a process is in place to document farms of origin of cattle as well as individual identification of cows.
- Develop and share the biosecurity plan for the event with exhibitors. The plan should:
 - Limit co-mingling of cows from different herds to the extent possible.
 - Exhibition spaces should be designed to limit nose to nose contact between animals with physical separation (such as tarps) provided to the extent possible.
 - Communicate expectations for milking of healthy cows while at the exhibition such as:
 - Require that all milk be disposed of, not sold or fed to other livestock;
 - Prohibition of dumping milk anywhere on the grounds outside of designated event tanks.
 - All waste milk be pasteurized (or similarly heat treated) or acidified before disposal.
 - Designate isolation areas and plans for milk discard for sick cows.
 - Establish a protocol to immediately isolate sick cows.
 - Isolation areas should be located away from all other cattle and the public.
 - Isolation areas should not share confined air space, panels/fence lines, feeding, or watering space with other animals.
 - Milk should be discarded according to state and local regulations.

- Limit direct contact with the general public to the extent possible (i.e., no “milk a cow” exhibits).
- Outline cleaning and disinfection procedures for both exhibition and isolation areas.
- Ensure handwashing stations with running water, soap, and paper towels will be available near the exit of the exhibition area.
- Establish an official show veterinarian for the event to manage sick animals.
- Work with state animal health officials to understand interstate and intrastate testing and movement requirements for exhibition cattle and communicate these requirements to exhibitors.
 - Interstate movements of lactating dairy cattle must follow [Federal requirements](#).
 - Additionally, state-specific guidance for moving cattle intrastate must be followed.

During the Event

- Communicate with exhibitors and their family members at the start of the exhibition to:
 - Review animal disease control measures to be utilized during the exhibition, including the daily monitoring of the animals during the show and biosecurity measures.
 - Provide specific actions that may be required if a cow becomes sick at the show (per the pre-event testing and movement requirements established with state animal health officials).
- Clean and disinfect equipment frequently.
 - Use approved disinfectants that are safe for human and animal contact: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>
- Ensure adequate ventilation and temperature control are in place.
- Post signs near the exhibition area exits that instruct visitors to wash their hands when leaving the animal area.

After the Event

- Clean and disinfect exhibition areas.
 - Use approved disinfectants that are safe for human and animal contact: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>
- Hold a debrief meeting to discuss what went well and improvements for next year.

For Exhibitors

Before the Event

- Become familiar with requirements for interstate movement as well as any state specific exhibition requirements prior to the event.
 - APHIS strongly recommends minimizing movement of cattle as much as possible, with special attention to evaluating risk and factoring that risk into movement decisions.
 - Consult with your veterinarian to discuss risk.
 - Lactating animals moving interstate to an exhibition, show, or sale must have a negative test result from samples collected within 7 days of movement. These animals may travel to their home herd using the same negative test result provided the exhibition, show, or sale does not exceed 10 days of length.

- Become familiar with signs of influenza in cattle and work with your veterinarian to ensure your animals are free of illness.
 - Signs of influenza in dairy cattle include decreased milk production; reduced appetite; thickened, discolored milk; lethargy; fever; and/or dehydration.
 - If you have any animals with clinical signs on the premises, do not move other animals off the premises.
- Ensure that any people that will be attending the fair or exhibition do not have any symptoms of illness.
- Clean and disinfect any equipment you will be bringing with you to the fair or exhibition such as:
 - Feed equipment
 - Cleaning utensils
 - Grooming equipment
 - Vehicle and Trailer (inside and out)
 - Portable milking equipment
 - Use approved disinfectants that are safe for human and animal contact:
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>
- Avoid transporting animals from different premises in the same trailer.

During the Event

- Keep copies of certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs), vaccination records, and test results on hand and readily available.
- Observe cattle regularly for signs of influenza-like illness (e.g. decreased milk production; reduced appetite; thickened, discolored milk; lethargy; fever; and/or dehydration).
 - Report sick cattle to the show veterinarian and exhibition organizers.
- Sick animals should be immediately removed from the exhibition or moved to the designated temporary isolation area; sick animals should be removed from the exhibition site as soon as possible.
 - Interaction with the sick animal should be limited to only people caring for the animal.
 - Dedicated personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves, gown/coveralls, boots or boot covers, should be worn by people caring for sick animals.
 - No treatment supplies, feed or water, portable milking equipment and supplies, or grooming supplies should be shared between sick animals and healthy animals.
 - Additional precautions such as hand washing before putting on and taking of PPE, changing clothes and boots should be taken by those caring for sick animals to minimize the opportunity for disease transmission to other cattle or people.
- Follow the event's biosecurity plan.
 - Avoid close contact with other exhibitor's animals and avoid nose to nose contact between animals.
- Follow the event guidance for handling milk from lactating cows.
- Do not share tools, feed and water, portable milking equipment and supplies, or grooming supplies with other exhibitors.

After the Event

- Isolate and observe animals daily for illness after returning home and before allowing contact with other animals.
 - Isolation should take place for 30 days.
 - Do not share equipment between show cattle and other animals at home.
- Discuss the need to test animals returning from an exhibition or fair for influenza A with your veterinarian.
- Consult a health care provider and your state or local public health department if exhibitors or family members develop [influenza-like illness](#) (e.g., fever or chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, tiredness, and/or vomiting and diarrhea).
 - Tell your healthcare provider you work with dairy cattle.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment you took to the show.
 - Use approved disinfectants that are safe for human and animal contact:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>

Additional Resources

USDA APHIS Resources

HPAI Detections in Livestock Website | <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock>

APHIS Requirements and Recommendations for HPAI in Livestock | <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/aphis-requirements-recommendations-hpai-livestock.pdf>

CDC Resources

H5N1 in Dairy Cattle Situation Website | <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/mammals.htm>

Biosecurity Resources

Secure Milk Supply Biosecurity Resources | <https://securemilksupply.org/training-materials/biosecurity/>

General Biosecurity Handout | <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/vs-hpai-biosecurity.pdf>

State Animal Health Official Contacts

SAHO Contact Information | https://www.usaha.org/upload/Federal%20and%20State%20Health/STATE_ANIMAL_HEALTH_OFFICIAL_S.pdf

Educational resources for the public

HPAI Recommendations for the Public | <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/hpai/hpai-interim-recommendations.html#recommendations-public>

Stay Healthy Around Animals |

https://nasphv.org/Documents/Public_settings_toolkit/Signs%20DP_stay%20healthy%20around%20animals.pdf

Wash Hands When Leaving Animal Exhibits | <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/resources/exhibits-hand-washing.pdf>