



APHIS Recommendations for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 Virus in Livestock For Workers April 12, 2024

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI) H5N1 virus is an emerging disease in cattle. While it is unclear exactly how virus is being moved around, the virus is shed in milk at high concentrations; therefore, anything that comes in contact with unpasteurized milk, spilled milk, etc. may spread the virus including humans, other animals, vehicles, and other objects or materials. This continues to be a rapidly evolving situation. USDA and Federal and State partners will continue to share additional updates as soon as information becomes available.

Specific Farm Worker Safety Recommendations (Contributed by CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends:

- Persons working with or around cattle, including those working with or disposing of milk waste, that are suspected or confirmed with H5N1 virus infection should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when in direct or close contact (within about 6 feet) with sick or dead animals, animal feces, litter, milk, or materials known to be or potentially contaminated with H5N1 viruses.
- Recommended PPE includes properly fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles or a face shield (if there is risk of liquid splash onto the respirator), disposable gloves, boots or boot covers, a NIOSH Approved^{®*} particulate respirator (e.g., N95[®] filtering facepiece respirator) *, disposable fluid-resistant coveralls, and disposable head cover or hair cover. Perform thorough hand washing before putting on and taking off PPE.
 - For younger children, it is important to remember that respirators are designed primarily to be used by adults in workplaces. The risks and benefits of children using them are not yet fully known. Additionally, for a respirator to be most effective, it must form a seal to the face to keep particles from leaking around the edges. Some respirators may be too big for younger children's faces.
- Persons working with or around cattle, even if not in close contact, should avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum, and other such activities in potentially contaminated areas; avoid rubbing or touching the eyes, as it can result in conjunctivitis (pink eye). They should perform thorough handwashing regularly, especially before eating, smoking, touching your face, and leaving work (including breaks), and before and after wearing PPE or going to the bathroom.
- People exposed to H5N1 virus-infected cattle (including people wearing recommended PPE) should be monitored for signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness beginning after their first exposure and for 10 days after their last exposure. Signs and symptoms in people can include:
 - Mild illness (e.g., cough, sore throat, eye redness or eye discharge such as conjunctivitis, fever or feeling feverish, rhinorrhea, fatigue, myalgia, arthralgia, headache)
 - People exposed to H5N1 virus-infected cattle (including people wearing recommended PPE) should be monitored for signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness beginning after their first exposure and for 10 days after their last exposure. Signs and symptoms in people can include:
 - Moderate to severe illness: (e.g., shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, altered mental status, seizures)

- Complications: pneumonia, respiratory failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome, multi-organ failure (respiratory and kidney failure), sepsis, meningoencephalitis
- If any person exposed to H5N1 virus infected cattle develops acute respiratory illness symptoms (see above) during the monitoring period, the person should seek medical attention and isolate.
- Additional guidance and details are available on the CDC webpages at:
 - [Recommendations for Worker Protection and Use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) to Reduce Exposure to Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Disease in Humans | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) \(cdc.gov\)](#)
 - [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Animals: Interim Recommendations for Prevention, Monitoring, and Public Health Investigations | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Biosecurity Information and Training for Farm Workers

The Secure Milk Supply Plan website provides excellent training and easy to use resources for dairy workers in English and Spanish related to biosecurity. The Secure Milk Supply Plan is a collaborative initiative between the dairy industry, USDA, State officials and three universities.

- [Biosecurity – Secure Milk Supply Plan](#)

** Attribution Statement*

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