



HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program



On May 30, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it is taking several actions as part of its ongoing efforts to protect the U.S. livestock industry from the threat posed by highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI or H5N1) in dairy cattle. Since the initial detection of H5N1 in dairy cattle, USDA has worked quickly and in concert with its Federal and State partners to better understand, mitigate the risk of spread, and contain the virus.

These actions include launching an HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program. This program is intended to be a cooperative effort between APHIS, regulatory State animal health agencies, the dairy industry and its stakeholders, and dairy producers. The program offers dairy producers more options to monitor the health of their herds and move cows interstate while further reducing H5N1 virus spread, increasing surveillance and expanding knowledge of the disease, and supporting an overall national program to reduce the risk of H5N1 in dairy herds.

The program augments the previously announced Federal Order; the financial support options already available to producers of affected and non-affected HPAI dairy herds to support biosecurity planning, implementation, and other treatment and prevention measures; and funding from USDA's forthcoming Emergency Assistance for Livestock,

Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program. The HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program establishes a national strategy to provide support for ongoing testing for HPAI in participating dairy herds and additional support to detect and respond to HPAI in affected dairy herds to better understand this virus and reduce the risk of further spread.

To learn more about USDA's response to H5N1 in dairy cattle, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock

How the Dairy Herd Status Program Works

Dairy producers who choose to enroll their herds will agree to weekly milk testing of their herd. After 3 consecutive weeks of negative test results for H5N1 at a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory, the herd will receive monitored unaffected status. Continued weekly bulk tank sample testing with negative results and participation in the Dairy Herd Status Program will allow the herd to maintain the monitored unaffected status and move animals interstate without additional individual animal premovement testing currently required under the Federal Order.

Those herds not enrolled in the program will continue to follow the interstate testing and movement requirements published in the Federal Order.

Enrollment in the Program

Interested producers can start enrolling in the **HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program by contacting their APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge or State Veterinarian**. A herd monitoring plan for sample collection and testing will be developed in concert with the producer, State, and APHIS officials. The date of first sample receipt at the NAHLN laboratory will be considered the participation start date.

A producer may decide to cancel participation in the program at any time unless otherwise required by State regulations or a State herd plan. The cancellation should be in writing to an APHIS Veterinary Services representative or

HPAI Dairy Herd Monitoring Plan

Once a producer enrolls, a written herd and/or premises monitoring plan will be developed between APHIS Veterinary Services in collaboration with the herd owner and State animal health officials. The plan will include biosecurity, movement, sampling, and testing parameters. The herd monitoring plan will become effective after it is reviewed by the National Incident Commander or their designee and signed by the APHIS Veterinary Services representative, the State representative, and the herd owner.

Herd Status Definitions

- **Provisional Herd:** Herds enrolled in the HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program in the first 3 weeks awaiting their official status.
- **Monitored Unaffected Herd:** Herds enrolled in the HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program with 3 consecutive weeks of negative prescribed testing results. These herds commit to ongoing monitoring described in their HPAI Dairy Herd Monitoring Plan, which alleviates the need for premovement testing for animals moving interstate.
- **Monitored Presumptive Positive Herd:** Herds enrolled in the HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program that have been identified as non-negative based on NAHLN testing. Herds may return to Monitored Unaffected Herd status if the results of required follow-up testing are all negative.
- **Monitored Affected Herd:** Herds participating in the HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program and have been identified as positive based on testing. Herds may return to Monitored Unaffected Herd Status after completing required testing with negative results.
- **Non-Enrolled Herd:** Herds that are not participating in the program, that are either unknown disease status or previously identified as positive and have not had any sample test positive from an individual animal for over 30 days.

Establishing and Maintaining Monitored Unaffected Herd Status in the Program

- During provisional enrollment, a herd must have 3 consecutive weeks of negative test results from a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory on bulk tank milk samples collected on-farm.
- In the third week, additional samples must be collected to represent lactating cattle on the premises that are not contributing milk for human consumption (for example, lactating animals isolated to a sick pen, newly freshened).

- Once the herd status is established, the producer will continue to arrange for collection and submission of milk samples for weekly testing per their established herd monitoring plan. Weekly samples will represent all animals in the milking strings and do not need to include samples from animals not contributing to the bulk tank milk.
- Provided all samples are negative, no additional premovement testing will be required for the animals in the herd while in a Monitored Unaffected status.
- Data have shown the sensitivity of 3 consecutive weeks of bulk tank milk testing representing the milking herd is high. Additional analyses have shown that positive results occur prior to widespread clinical illness in the herd. Therefore, it is unlikely that including milk from sick or newly freshened cows during the maintenance phase of the program would significantly increase the chance of detecting an affected herd.
- State or Federal animal health officials may review required documentation and sample collection procedures at any time.
- Producer/producer representative shall continue to monitor the herd for clinical signs consistent with HPAI in dairy cattle.

Regaining Monitored Unaffected Herd Status

Below are the steps to clear your herd and regain Monitored Unaffected status after a positive test result:

- An epidemiological investigation will be prioritized for any previously Provisional or Monitored Herd, enabling subsequent movement restrictions for low-risk animals to resume as soon as possible.
- On-farm samples are collected and submitted to a NAHLN laboratory for 2 consecutive weeks of negative test results.
- Concurrent with the second weekly negative test results, the producer will collect and submit samples composed of pooled milk from all lactating cows in the sick and fresh pens. This test must also be negative.
- The herd shall demonstrate an absence of all of the following for at least 2 weeks:
 - Clinical signs
 - Production changes (such as unusual drop in milk production) associated with HPAI in cattle
 - Herd illness (in particular mastitis and respiratory disease) rates above expected seasonal baseline levels

While a herd is in Monitored Affected status, the herd will not be able to move lactating animals as outlined in the Federal Order and associated guidance.