



For Immediate Release
March 26, 2024

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Texas and Kansas Dairy Herds

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received confirmation of the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in diagnostic samples from two Texas and two Kansas dairies.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), TAHC, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL), and dairy veterinarians, along with other partners, are working closely to evaluate symptoms among primarily older dairy cows in Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico, of decreased lactation, low appetite, and other clinical signs. Diagnostic samples of unpasteurized milk from affected cattle collected from two dairy farms in Kansas and one in Texas, as well as an oropharyngeal swab from another dairy in Texas, were confirmed HPAI positive on March 25, 2024.

Additional testing was conducted after dairies reported finding deceased wild birds on their properties. The HPAI virus detections in Texas may have been introduced by wild birds. Initial testing by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories has not found changes to the virus that would make it more transmissible to humans, which would indicate that the current risk to the public remains low.

Federal and state agencies are moving quickly to conduct additional testing for HPAI, as well as viral genome sequencing, so the emerging situation can be better understood, including characterization of the HPAI strain or strains associated with these detections. Further efforts to continue epidemiological investigations are underway, to ensure the full picture of the situation is considered.

Dairies are strongly encouraged to implement enhanced biosecurity measures to help prevent the spread of disease. It is recommended to limit persons coming onto dairies to employees and essential personnel only and to follow best management practices including washing hands often. Additional biosecurity resources are available through [Secure Milk Supply](#).

According to the USDA, at this stage, there is no concern about the safety of the commercial milk supply or that this circumstance poses any increased risk to consumer health. Dairies are required to send only milk from healthy animals into processing for human consumption. Milk from affected animals is being diverted or destroyed so that it does not enter the food supply. In addition, pasteurization has continually proven to inactivate bacteria and viruses, like influenza, in milk. Pasteurization is required for any milk sold in stores.

USDA, TAHC, and other agencies continue to assess this situation to fully understand the role of HPAI in the affected cattle. If you believe dairy cattle within your herd are showing clinical signs, contact your herd veterinarian immediately. Veterinarians at the dairy facility level can best assess these animals, decide on the appropriate supportive care for them, and determine the appropriate samples to be taken and diagnostics to be performed. Veterinarians should contact TVMDL-Canyon, 806-651-7478, for additional diagnostic guidance. This is an evolving situation and additional updates will be provided as they become available.

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