



Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in cattle

A new disease has been identified in **cows**, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). It has been reported in dairy herds in Texas, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, Idaho, Ohio, North Carolina, and South Dakota. Based on current data available, here are answers to some common questions:

What is HPAI?

Source:

- Wild migratory birds are believed to be the initial source of infection of this virus in cattle.

Transmission risk:

- Cow-to-cow cannot be ruled out.
- Cow-to-human transmission risk is possible but unlikely, and human cases remain very low.

How to reduce spread?

Cattle movement into California:

- Minimize animal movement into your dairy from affected areas.
- In April 2024, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) *added restrictions* and *increased inspection* requirements for animal movements.

Implement on-farm biosecurity:

- Isolate suspected sick animals for HPAI.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE, coverall, goggles, disposable gloves).
- Wash boots before entering premises.

When to suspect?

Herd-level

- Drop in bulk tank milk yield and pen feed intakes.
- Higher than usual cow numbers in the hospital pen.

Cow-level

- Signs of illness (dehydrated, depressed, fever).
- Abnormal milk (thick, discolored) and feces (loose or tacky).

Tip: Older mid-lactation cows are most affected. Younger cattle can also be impacted.

Pic source: Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center.



No depopulation is needed.

- Current cases indicate only ~10 to 20% of cows in the herd become sick.
- Low to no reported cattle deaths from HPAI.

CALL TO CONFIRM A HERD CASE

- California Animal Health Official **(916) 900-5002**.
- Local CDFA Animal Health Branch District Office.

Reduce risk of human transmission

Protect Yourself:

- Wear goggles, gloves, and a face mask when handling sick or dead animals and their feces (cattle, goats, and birds), and wash your clothes with disinfectant.

Avoid Possible Contaminated Foods:

- Raw or uncooked foods, especially unpasteurized (raw) cheese or milk.

If exposed:

Monitor Your Symptoms:

- Check for respiratory symptoms and eye redness for 10 days.

If Sick:

- Go to the doctor.
- Isolate yourself from others, including household members.

Milk Safety Assurance:

- Only milk from healthy animals is allowed to enter the human food supply.
- Pasteurization is effective at killing influenza virus in milk.

Preventative Measures:

- Destroy milk from affected animals.
- Pasteurize milk from HPAI positive or suspected animals if used to feed calves.