



Health Advisory

August 30, 2024

Avian Influenza Confirmed in Three California Dairy Herds – Screening Guidelines for Healthcare Providers

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has confirmed that cows at three Central Valley dairies have tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), where the test results were confirmed today after cows began to show symptoms on August 25, 2024. However, there is no risk to consumers from milk or dairy products, as pasteurization effectively inactivates the virus. Pasteurized milk, dairy products, and properly handled meat and eggs remain safe to consume.

No human cases of HPAI have been confirmed in California related to this incident. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is collaborating with CDFA and local health departments to monitor any individuals who may be exposed to infected animals to ensure prompt clinical and public health interventions. CDPH will provide official confirmation of any human cases associated with this incident.

With the detection of HPAI in dairies elsewhere in the US in recent months, CDFA has been engaged with private veterinarians, farmers and ranchers, and local, state and federal partners to develop response plans and actively monitor for the disease in livestock and poultry throughout California. Based on this recent notification, local public health jurisdictions are taking a proactive approach by sending out this health advisory. The Public Health Departments are actively collaborating with state health and agricultural agencies to monitor the situation. Local health departments are working with affected dairies to ensure workers are receiving health checks and have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent infection.

Healthcare providers should consider avian influenza A (H5N1) in patients with occupational exposure to cattle herds who present with flu-like symptoms or conjunctivitis, particularly if other common causes, such as COVID-19, have been ruled out. Please advise these patients to wear a well-fitted mask prior to arrival and during medical care and ensure that medical staff follow contact and airborne precautions while evaluating them.

Although specimen collection should be conducted by the healthcare provider, currently testing for H5N1 is conducted exclusively at public health laboratories. Therefore, coordinating with the public health department for the recommended tests, storage, and shipping is crucial.

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

Health Information: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

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Confirmed H5N1 human illness is an immediately notifiable condition. Persons with suspected occupationally acquired H5N1 should be promptly isolated, and the cases should be reported to the Local Health Jurisdiction Communicable Disease Investigation Program for guidance on specimen collection, testing and reporting:

- Madera County Department of Public Health: (559) 675-7894 or email: cdreporting@maderacounty.com
- Fresno County Department of Public Health: (559) 600-3332, or after hours at (559) 600-3111
- Kings County Department of Public Health: (559) 584-1401, or after hours at (559) 852-2720
- Tulare County Department of Public Health: (559) 685-5720 or CDreporting@tularecounty.ca.gov
- Kern County Department of Public Health: (661) 321-3000, or after hours at (661) 241-3255

Additional precautions:

- Advise patients to isolate at home if H5N1 infection is suspected and testing is pending.
- Emphasize the importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Use appropriate PPE when evaluating patients with suspected H5N1 HPAI with standard, contact and airborne precautions (gowns, gloves, eye protection and N95 respirator).
- Consider a prescription for oseltamivir (Tamiflu), adjusted for age and renal function for suspected H5N1 infection while waiting for laboratory testing results, as this is more effective if given within 48 hours of illness onset. Per CDC recommendations, oseltamivir treatment is recommended as soon as possible for people with HPAI A(H5N1) virus infection and close contacts/family members of patients with suspected or confirmed HPAI illness.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this important public health matter.

References:

1. [CDFA - Public Affairs - AVIAN INFLUENZA CONFIRMED IN THREE CALIFORNIA DAIRY HERDS](#)
2. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/HPAI.html
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/index.html>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/spotlights/hpai-health-recommendations.html>
5. https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/hpai-interim-recommendations.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/hpai/hpai-interim-recommendations.html
6. <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/recommendations-workers-hpai-livestock.pdf>
7. https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/hcp/clinicians-evaluating-patients/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/clinicians-evaluating-patients.htm
8. <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/hcp/novel-av-treatment-guidance/index.html>