

March 4, 2025

Dear Pennsylvania Poultry Producers,

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) (H5N1) has been circulating in the wild bird population in the United States and was identified in commercial poultry in early 2022. Since February 8, 2022, HPAI has been identified in 1,622 flocks, including 767 commercial poultry and 855 backyard flocks, affecting 166.19 million birds. Fifty-one states have now been affected, and trade restrictions as a result of the infected flocks have been widespread. **In the past 30 days, 113 confirmed flocks have been reported, with more than 12.6 million birds affected. More than half of these flocks have been classified as commercial flocks.**

H5N1 detections in migrating wild birds continue, and these recent detections should act as a reminder that a virulent strain of Avian Influenza virus continues to circulate in the wild bird population and continues to be introduced into commercial and backyard poultry.

On March 25, 2024, USDA reported that HPAI, H5N1, had been confirmed in two dairy herds in Texas, and two in Kansas. Dairy cattle were exhibiting a decrease of milk production and other clinical signs. The number of cases in dairy herds has increased to 977 confirmed cases in 17 states. **In the past 30 days, 17 new cases have been confirmed in dairy herds in 4 states.** No cases have been reported in PA dairies to date. USDA has reported that there is evidence that the virus has spread from infected dairy cattle to poultry. The finding of the virus in dairy cattle, when Pennsylvania has many mixed-species farms, adds a new level of concern, especially for poultry which may be housed outdoors. Additionally, evidence of transmission of the virus from dairy cattle to poultry highlights the need to maintain separation of poultry from dairy animals.

The Centers for Disease Control has reported 70 cases of confirmed human cases of HPAI, and reports that the majority of those cases are linked to infected poultry or dairy cattle.

**The Department is currently recommending heightened biosecurity focusing on preventing contact of poultry with wild birds and with dairy cattle.** For assistance with wild bird mitigation, contact USDA Wildlife Services at 717-236-9451 or 866-487-3297. Premises with more than one species should have each species area handled as a separate and biosecure premises.

**The Department recommends maintaining poultry indoors during this period of heightened risk if possible.** The Department will again assess risk in early June, 2025. All producers should assess the risk to their poultry and make informed decisions about allowing outdoor access.

Producers are encouraged to implement strict biosecurity practices at all times, monitor bird health, and report any unexplained mortality and morbidity in a flock to the Department at 717-772-2852, option 1 (24/7). Producers with co-located dairy cattle should monitor the health of these animals and are encouraged to enroll in the voluntary Pennsylvania Lactating Cow Health Monitoring Program, and contact the Department with concerns.



It is also recommended that any poultry producer who notices black vultures, hawks, or wild waterfowl near a poultry premises maintain their flock indoors. If any wild birds are seen dead, please contact the PA Game Commission or USDA Wildlife Services.

Thank you,

*Alex Hamberg*

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