



Current H5N1 Bird Flu Situation in Dairy Cows

WHAT TO KNOW

A multistate outbreak of HPAI A(H5N1) bird flu in dairy cows was first reported on March 25, 2024. This is the first time that these bird flu viruses had been found in cows. In the United States, since 2022, USDA APHIS has reported HPAI A(H5N1) virus detections in more than 200 mammals.

Domestic Summary

On April 1, CDC confirmed one human HPAI A(H5N1) infection in a person with exposure to dairy cows in Texas that were presumed to be infected with the virus. This is thought to be the first instance of likely mammal to human spread of HPAI A(H5N1) virus. In May 2024, CDC began reporting additional, sporadic human cases in people who had exposure to infected dairy cows. That latest human case counts are available at [H5N1 Bird Flu: Current Situation Summary](#).

Data

States with Outbreaks in Dairy Cows

12

as of 6/28/2024 | [Full Report >](#)

Dairy Herds Affected

132

as of 6/28/2024 | [Full Report >](#)

Monitoring for H5 in People

[CDC systems](#) that monitor national, state, and local level influenza data are being used during the current avian influenza A(H5N1) situation. These systems show no indicators of unusual influenza activity in people, including avian influenza A(H5N1).



Three human cases of influenza A(H5N1) virus infection have been reported in the U.S., following exposure to dairy cattle.

Background

While rare, mammals can be infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) ("H5N1 bird flu") viruses. Reports of these sporadic infections in mammals have occurred globally amid widespread outbreaks of bird flu infections in wild birds and poultry.

Mammals can be infected with H5N1 bird flu viruses when they eat infected birds, poultry, or other animals and/or if they are exposed to environments contaminated with virus. Spread of H5N1 bird flu viruses from mammal to mammal is thought to be rare, but possible.

Global Summary

Globally, sporadic HPAI A(H5N1) virus infections in mammals have been reported across the continents of Asia, North America, South America, and Europe. More information about the global impact of avian influenza can be found here: [Avian Influenza - WOAHA - World Organisation for Animal Health](#). [↗](#)

Specifically, recent HPAI A(H5N1) infections in mammals have been detected in sea lions in Peru and Chile, sea elephants in Argentina, and foxes in Canada, France, and other countries. A list of significant HPAI outbreaks, including in mammals, can be found here: [Highlights in the History of Avian Influenza](#)

Risk to Humans

The wide geographic spread of HPAI A(H5N1) viruses in wild birds, poultry, and some other mammals, including in cows, could create additional opportunities for people to be exposed to these viruses. Therefore, there could be an increase in sporadic human infections resulting from bird and animal exposures, even if the risk of these viruses spreading from birds to people has not increased. CDC believes the current risk to the general public from bird flu viruses is low. People who have job-related or recreational exposure to infected birds or animals, including cows, are at greater risk of contracting HPAI A(H5N1) virus. CDC has recommendations related to testing, treatment of HPAI A(H5N1) infection and prevention of exposure to these viruses: [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Animals: Interim Recommendations for Prevention, Monitoring, and Public Health Investigations](#).

Vaccination

Getting a seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H5N1 bird flu

While getting a seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H5N1 bird flu, it is important that people who may have frequent exposure to infected or potentially infected birds or other animals get a seasonal flu vaccine, ideally 2 weeks before their potential exposure. This is because it can reduce the risk of getting sick with human and avian influenza A viruses at the same time. [Prevention and Antiviral Treatment of Avian Influenza A Viruses in People | Bird Flu | CDC](#)

Resources

CDC Resources

Guidance

[Considerations and Information for Fair Exhibitors to Help Prevent Influenza](#)

[Considerations and Information for Fair Organizers to Help Prevent Influenza](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Animals: Interim Recommendations for Prevention, Monitoring, and Public Health Investigations](#)

[Reducing Risk for People Working with or Exposed to Animals](#)

[Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals](#)

[Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals \(Spanish\)](#)

[Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals \(K'iche'\)](#)

[Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals \(Nahuatl\)](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Cats](#)

[HAN: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus: Identification of Human Infection and Recommendations for Investigations and Response](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Animals: Interim Recommendations for Prevention, Monitoring, and Public Health Investigations](#)

News

[Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) U.S. Situation Update and CDC Activities](#)

CDC continues to respond to the public health challenge posed by the outbreak of avian influenza A(H...

[Update: Human Infection with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus in Texas](#)

This is the first time this virus has been found in cows and the first case of cow-to-human bird flu

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A \(H5N1\) Virus Infection Reported in a Person in the U.S.](#)

CDC public health news, press releases, government public health news, medical and disease news, sto...

[CDC Reports First U.S. Human Infection in 2024 with Variant Influenza Virus](#)

CDC Reports First U.S. Human Infection in 2024 with Variant Influenza Virus

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A \(H5N1\) Virus Infection Reported in a Person in the U.S.](#)

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[Technical Update: Summary Analysis of Genetic Sequences of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Viruses in Texas](#)

Related webpages

[What CDC Is Doing to Respond to Bird Flu Outbreaks](#)

[H5N1 Bird Flu: Current Situation](#)

[What Causes Bird Flu Virus Infections in Humans](#)

[Avian Influenza in Birds: Causes and How It Spreads](#)

[What Causes Bird Flu in Pets and Other Animals](#)

Publications

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus Infections in a Dairy Farm Worker, NEJM, 2024](#)

[Supplementary Appendix](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Clade 2.3.4.4b Virus Infection in Domestic Dairy Cattle and Cats, United States, 2024](#)

[Detection of Novel Influenza Viruses Through Community and Healthcare Testing: Implications for Surveillance Efforts in the United States](#)

USDA Resources

[Recommendations to Minimize Influenza Transmission at Dairy Cattle Livestock Exhibitions](#)

[Federal Order to Assist with Developing a Baseline of Critical Information and Limiting the Spread of H5N1 in Dairy Cattle: Frequently Asked Questions \(usda.gov\)](#)

[USDA APHIS Testing Guidance for Labs for Influenza A in Livestock \[289 KB, 3 pages\]](#)

[USDA APHIS Requirements and Recommendations for HPAI H5N1 Virus in Livestock for State Animal Health Officials, Accredited Veterinarians and Producers](#)

[USDA livestock case definitions](#)

[USDA Confirms Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Herd in New Mexico](#)

[USDA, FDA and CDC Share Update on HPAI Detections in Dairy Cattle](#)

[Federal and State Veterinary, Public Health Agencies Share Update on HPAI Detection in Kansas, Texas Dairy Herds](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Detections in Livestock](#)

[Influenza: Not Just for the Birds \(usda.gov\)](#)

[APHIS Recommendations for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) H5N1 Virus in Livestock](#)

FDA Resources

[Updates on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\)](#)

[Questions and Answers Regarding Milk Safety During Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Outbreaks](#)

Other Documented Mammalian Infections

In recent years, HPAI H5N1 infections have been detected in mammals including but not limited to wild or feral animals such as foxes, bears, and seals; stray or domestic animals such as cats and dogs; farm animals, such as goats, cows, and mink, and zoo animals such as tigers and leopards. A timeline, which includes mammalian detections of bird flu, can be found here: [Highlights in the History of Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\) Timeline – 2020-2024](#)

READ NEXT

What CDC Is Doing to Respond to Flu Outbreaks



JUNE 27, 2024

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CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#)

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