



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 20, 2024

Dear Industry Partners,

Effective Tuesday, November 26, 2024, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is implementing mandatory testing of tankers delivering raw bulk milk to milk processors. This step is being taken to ensure adequate surveillance of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in dairy cattle and prevent a widespread outbreak of the disease in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania has been monitoring the outbreaks of HPAI in dairy cattle occurring in several states. Transmission of the disease from farm to farm has occurred in other states due to a variety of circumstances, including through animals, people, and equipment. While farmers have worked hard to implement biosecurity practices, there is still a greater need for testing and surveillance to provide a system for containment of this highly transmissible disease through early detection.

Pennsylvania is a diverse livestock state, with heavy concentrations of dairy and poultry farms in several counties. In some cases, farmers in Pennsylvania raise both dairy and poultry on the same premise, which means our state faces a unique set of risk factors. In order to prevent devastating losses to our livestock and poultry sectors, it is imperative to create robust detection and mitigation strategies.

To be proactive against the spread of HPAI and protect the ag industry, the PA Department of Agriculture has implemented a statewide quarantine order that will require:

- Any cooperative or milk processor marketing milk from a Pennsylvania dairy farm to pull samples from tanker trucks delivering the milk.
- Samples must be collected from every pickup route once every 14 days to ensure that all farms supplying milk to those plants are covered.

All testing will be handled by Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System labs at no cost to the farmer, milk processor, or hauler. If milk from a tanker truck tests positive for HPAI, the Department will work with the processor to determine which farms supplied milk for that particular tanker. From there, the Department's Bureau of Animal Health will take samples from individual farms to determine the source.



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In the event of a positive case, the Department will work with the affected dairy farm to ensure continuity of operations. Department staff will work with the impacted producer on biosecurity standards that will allow for the continuity of business, including shipping of milk, by establishing risk mitigation efforts to prevent the spread to other farms.

Dairy herds impacted by HPAI can have lasting, long-term impacts on both the herd and business operations. Once introduced to a herd, HPAI will quickly spread through the remainder of the herd causing even greater loss of milk production and productivity. HPAI remains fatal for domestic poultry. Regardless of the species, early detection is key to protecting animals, workers, and the industry.

Biosecurity planning and practices remain the best defense against HPAI. No-cost information and assistance for biosecurity are available by contacting the Bureau of Animal Health, or through the Center of Dairy Excellence. The Department encourages all Pennsylvania dairies to enroll in the voluntary Lactating Dairy Cow Health Monitoring Program, which will provide critical information at the farm level.

We appreciate the dairy and poultry industries willingness to work proactively with the Department throughout this national outbreak to safeguard Pennsylvania's agriculture economy.

Questions about this testing program can be directed to the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Health at 717-772-2852, or email at [RA-ahds@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ahds@pa.gov). A list of Frequently Asked Questions is available on the Department's website.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell C. Redding".

Russell C. Redding  
Secretary