

KEY INSIGHTS & FAQs

for avian influenza 2024



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Where can I get a summary of HPAI detections in Washington State?

- **Outbreak statistics:** Since the outbreak began in 2022, there have been 1,181 commercial and backyard flocks in 48 states, with 2 commercial premises and 46 backyard flocks detected in 17 counties in WA. No strains have been detected in dairy cows.
- **Within WA state:**
 - » **Domestic birds:** Washington State Department of Agriculture maintains a list of positive detections in domestic birds:
 - [Avian Influenza | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)
 - WSDA also maintains an interactive surveillance map here: [ArcGIS Web Application](#)
 - » **Wild birds:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains a list and map of positive detections in wild birds:
 - [Avian influenza \(bird flu\) | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- **Nationally:**
 - » **USDA-APHIS tracks animal cases nationally, including livestock, poultry, and wildlife:**
 - [2022–2024 Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](#) (usda.gov)
 - Currently, this does not include numbers of reported cases in domestic cats.
 - » **CDC tracks human cases nationally:** [H5 Bird Flu: Current Situation | Bird Flu | CDC](#)

Who should I report to if I see birds or livestock with concerning clinical signs or mass morbidity/mortality?

Report all diseases that are new/emerging, appear in a new species, are more pathogenic than expected to the State Veterinarian. [Reportable Diseases | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)

If you are working in a dairy with an unexpected drop in milk production, fever, dehydration, decreased rumination, please report immediately.

What is the process when you suspect a poultry facility or dairy is infected?

WSDA contacts the premises, completes sampling and sends them to WADDL for testing. All non-negative results are sent to NVSL for confirmation and Whole Genomic Sequencing (WGS).

What do changes in the clades actually mean?

Viruses are always reassorting and WGS gives us information about how transmission occur (point source vs lateral spread) and whether the virus has any markers consistent with mammalian transmission.



This year is the first time we've seen clade 2.3.4.4b D1.1 genotype in a poultry flock. New genotypes are not unexpected as we see an influx of migratory waterfowl during the autumn migration. The USDA HPAI website has the latest information, visit: www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/2022-hpai

When you say that it is a reassortment of the circulating Eurasian strain that we have been dealing with and a North American strain, can you tell me a bit more about what this means?

There are eight genes (segments) in the flu virus. Four of those genes - HA, PB1, MP, and NS - are all Eurasian, and are consistent with the circulating virus (original genotype, A3, introduced from the Pacific flyway). The other four genes - PB2, PA, NP and NA - are North American. In the current situation, H5N1 includes the HA and NA genes; in this genotype, the HA is the Goose Guangdong 2.3.4.4b (Eurasian), and the NA gene is a North American gene. Reassortment of this virus is to be expected and is common.

What type of surveillance is done after you get a detection in commercial poultry?

WSDA manages a 10km surveillance zone where mandatory testing is done to allow for business continuity of commercial poultry and eggs. We also work with dairies in the area to do voluntary surveillance.

What surveillance of dairy farms is being done around infected poultry facilities?

WA State Veterinarian's office has been working with the local dairies and the milk co-op on surveillance plans within the Franklin County control zone. One round of testing last week showed all were negative at WADDL (NAHLN). The dairies have activated their secure milk supply plans and have been educated on personal protective equipment to keep workers safe. Ongoing surveillance will continue for up to 4 weeks.

Do we have the dairy strain in Washington state?

As of today, we have not detected the B3.13 strain in Washington. To date, all 48 detections have been the Eurasian Strain clade 2.3.4.4b type associated with wild waterfowl introduction.

What would response look like in a dairy farm?

[HPAI \(H5N1\) in Cattle Producer Resources | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)

- Processor will collect duplicate samples and ship from their central lab to WADDL overnight.
 - » All samples must go to WADDL, as the only official, approved laboratory in the state.
 - » Results available within 24 hours of collection.
 - » If PCR "non-negative", State Vet notified and samples go to NVSL for confirmation.



- POSITIVE HERDS
 - » State vet will work with bovine issues working group to determine a statewide surveillance strategy.
 - All herds in an associated milk shed would have mandatory sampling/ testing.
 - Surveillance could start at the processor/ silo level for other milk sheds.
 - Ideally, herds would have farm level sampling within 72hours.
 - All raw milk herds and independent producer/ handlers would be sampled by WSDA food safety program within 2 weeks.
 - All herds would be tested weekly for 4 weeks.
 - » State Vet will work with producer on lactating cow movement restriction plan
 - Lactating animals may move direct to slaughter only (no sale barns or points of commingling)
 - › If animals are moved to slaughter out of state, permitting will be required.
 - › Slaughter facilities must be notified ahead of time.
 - Heifers, dry cows and bull calves can continue to move in normal channels.
 - » State vet will:
 - work to implement enhanced biosecurity plans.
 - complete an epidemiological investigation.
 - perform trace outs to see where cows have moved in the prior two weeks for sampling/ notification of producers.
 - require waste milk fed to calves to be pasteurized.
 - » Local health jurisdiction will be notified and PPE will be made available for workers.
 - » All mortality of cats, peri-domestic wild animals/ birds should be reported for testing.
 - » Bulk tank tests will be required each week until the farm tests negative (>40 ct value) for 2 weeks in a row-
 - expect 3-5 weeks for herd to fully recover.
 - After 2 negative tests, normal lactating cow movement can resume.
 - » Financial support
 - Herd qualifies for USDA financial support and ELAP program for lost milk production.
 - Costs associated with sampling/ shipping and testing will be covered.
 - For more information on USDA assistance, go here: [Financial Assistance | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (usda.gov).
 - » Herds that have 3 negative weekly tests qualify for the herd status program. [Dairy Herd Status Program | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (usda.gov).



What happens to eggs and poultry in an infected premises?

- Birds from infected flocks are depopulated to prevent the spread of disease and mortalities are disposed of using USDA protocols.
- **No infected birds or eggs have entered the food supply.** As always, cook poultry and eggs to at least 165°F to kill bacteria and viruses.
- While routine milk pasteurization removes bacteria and viruses like HPAI, raw milk products do not share that level of protection. See FDA's [Milk Safety During HPAI Outbreaks](#)

What happened with the farmworkers that became infected?

Our animal health responders work in partnership with DOH to protect workers.

- The result of 4 presumptive positive human cases is not unexpected, due to the exposure to high levels of virus on the infected farm. Failures to correctly use PPE was likely the cause.
- The immediate risk to the public from H5 bird flu remains low, but keep your birds away from wild waterfowl, and don't pick up sick or dead birds.
- This event is very stressful for poultry producers and the employees working on those farms.

What should I do if I have SICK BIRDS or find sick or dead wildlife?

- People concerned about avian influenza in domestic animals including reporting of sick or dead birds should contact WSDA. agr.wa.gov/departments/animals-livestock-and-pets/avian-health/avian-influenza
- People concerned about HPAI in wildlife including reporting of sick or dead birds should contact WDFW. wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bird-flu



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