

Animal Health Recommendations to Minimize Influenza Transmission at Dairy Cattle Livestock Exhibitions/Shows

Background Information

Since late March 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state veterinary and public health officials have been investigating the detection of H5N1 Influenza Virus in Dairy Cows.

This disease is deadly to domestic poultry. While it causes less severe illness in cattle than in poultry, the disease remains of concern for all livestock and also for humans who come into contact with infected animals.

It has been identified that spread of this disease is occurring between cows within the same herd, from cows to poultry, between dairies associated with cattle movements, and from cows without clinical signs that have tested positive. Milk from infected cows has been proven to be infected and provides a significant opportunity for spread of this influenza virus.

Fairs and exhibitions provide an opportunity for learning and to showcase the hard work invested in agricultural animals. Unfortunately, these exhibitions also provide an opportunity for illness to spread among animals from multiple herds. Appropriate measures should be taken to minimize the potential for spread of influenza. Although it may not be possible to prevent all transmission of influenza viruses at livestock exhibitions, the recommended measures described here are offered for careful consideration depending on the needs of the specific exhibition.

For Exhibition Organizers

- Develop a knowledge base with all event organizers and show staff. The educational package should include:
 - Basic understanding of H5N1 influenza, the impact and epidemiology associated with its spread, and the associated clinical signs. All should understand the role the lactating dairy animal plays in the spread of this disease.
 - Signs of influenza in dairy cattle: decreased milk production; reduced appetite; thickened, discolored milk; lethargy; fever; and/or dehydration.
 - Contact information for the show veterinarian.

- Contact information for Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health; 785 564-6601.
- Contact information for county public health officials.
- Establish and have present an official show veterinarian for the event. Veterinarian should be present during check-in and make daily health checks throughout the stalling area.
- Require and review that all animals are documented on a current and valid Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI).
 - CVI should contain a permit number and the statement that the listed animals are not exhibiting signs and have not originated from a premises with cattle exhibiting signs consistent with H5N1 influenza in dairy cattle.
 - Ensure that all animals moving interstate (crossing state lines) to and/or from the show are in compliance with federal movement requirements including the Federal Order issued 4/24/2024.
 - Lactating dairy animals moving interstate to an exhibition, show or sale must have a negative test result from milk samples collected within 7 days of the movement. These animals may travel to their home herd using the same negative test result provided the show, exhibition or sale does not exceed 10 days of length.
- Consider implementing a pre-arrival milk testing requirement for lactating animals.
 - Verify process for viewing test results and/or documentation on CVI.
- Have in place a robust traceability/show entry process. Document the following information for each entry:
 - Exhibitor contact information
 - Farm of origin
 - Individual official identification of all animals
 - Stalling information/location
- Consider adjusting time span that lactating animals are required to be on site to a minimum. (Can they arrive late and depart early to minimize risk of exposure?)
- Develop a show staff and exhibitor educational opportunity/meeting at the start of the event to review animal disease control measures, biosecurity information, symptoms, and clinical signs of concern. Outline the specific plan of action and the reporting expectations for animals that may become sick at the show.
- Consider pre-drafting communication talking points in the event of a H5N1 detection at the exhibition.
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/hpai-dairy-faqs.pdf>
- Limit co-mingling of animals from different herds to the extent possible.
 - Provide separation of animals within the stall barn.
 - Develop a plan to provide separation among the various species.
- Designate isolation areas in the event sick animals are identified:

- Located away from all other cattle and the public.
- Isolation areas should not share confined space, panels/fence lines, feeding or watering equipment with other animals.
- Sick animals should be immediately removed from the exhibition/stalling area. They should be removed from the exhibition premises as soon as possible.
- Interaction with the sick animals should be limited to only the people caring for the animal(s).
- Provide and use dedicated personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for sick animals. PPE should include:
 - Disposable gloves
 - Gowns/coveralls
 - Boots or boot covers
 - Eye protection
- Maintain a list with contact info of all personnel that have had contact with sick animals.
- Provide handwashing station for use before putting on or taking off PPE.
- Outline cleaning and disinfection procedures for exhibition, stalling, and isolation areas and equipment.
- Ensure availability of handwashing stations throughout the exhibition premises. Include signage that encourages visitors to wash their hands when leaving the show.
- Limit direct contact with general public (i.e., do not host any type of “milk a cow” exhibits or contests).
- Do not provide access to a community milking parlor.
 - Exhibitors must provide a method to milk their own lactating cows.
 - Do not allow the sharing of milking machines or facilities.
- Require that all milk be properly disposed of (not sold or fed to other animals).
 - Prohibit the dumping of milk anywhere on the show grounds/premises.
 - Waste milk may be acidified or pasteurized before being disposed of.
- Additional resources can be found on the USDA website at:
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock>
- Approved disinfectants that are safe for human and animal contact:
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>

For Exhibitors

- Minimize movement and exposure of cattle as much as possible with consideration and evaluation of the risk associated with those movement decisions.
- Become familiar with the signs associated with influenza in cattle and work with your veterinarian to ensure your animals are free of illness.
 - Signs of influenza in dairy cattle include decreased milk production; reduced appetite; thickened, discolored milk; lethargy; fever; and/or dehydration.
- Obtain the required movement documents (Certificate of Veterinary Inspection with permit) from your veterinarian before arriving at the show.
- Observe animals on a regular basis and report any suspicious signs of illness to show management and/or show veterinarian.
- Clean and disinfect any equipment that you take to the show and/or bring home to your farm.
 - Feed and water equipment.
 - Grooming equipment.
 - Stalling and cleaning equipment.
 - Vehicle and trailer (inside and out).
 - Portable milking equipment.
- Do not share tools, feed and water equipment, portable milking equipment, and grooming supplies and equipment.
- Avoid transporting animals from different premises in the same trailer.
- Develop an enhanced biosecurity plan for animals when returning home. This plan should include:
 - Isolation and observation for illness of show animals after returning home before allowing contact with other animals.
 - Isolation should be for a minimum of 30 days.
 - Do not share equipment between show animals and other animals on the farm without cleaning and disinfecting the equipment.
 - Utilize separate boots and clothing when tending to show animals.
 - Minimize contact between show animals and humans during the isolation period.
- Discuss with your local veterinarian the possibility of testing your show animals for influenza, both pre- and post-exhibition.
- Promptly report any symptoms associated with H5N1 in dairy cattle to your local veterinarian.
- Consult a health care provider if exhibitors or family members develop influenza-like symptoms, particularly within 10 days of the event.

Contributing source: USDA – APHIS “Recommendations to Minimize Influenza Transmission at Dairy Cattle Livestock Exhibition.”

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