



To: Dairy farmers
Date: April 19, 2024
Subject: Recommended biosecurity measures to reduce risks of HPAI on dairy farms (2nd edition)

**Guidance subject to updates as we learn more about the transmission of the virus.*

The progression of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) requires heightened biosecurity measures on farms. As we still know little about this emerging disease and how it is spreading in North America, the biosecurity measures recommended below aim to cover various possibilities of transmission.

At this time, epidemiological investigation suggests that introducing an infected cow, and/or contaminated feed or water can each spread the virus in a herd.

Prevent HPAI in your dairy herd:

- *Prevent contact with wildlife*
- *Avoid cattle movement into your herd*

If you see clinical signs that look like HPAI in your herd:

- *Contact your vet*
- *Isolate affected animals*

Information from the CFIA:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has developed a page to keep [the public, farmers and veterinarians informed](#) of how this disease evolves and biosecurity measures that may help mitigate risks.

Milk Safety and Quality:

- Only milk from healthy cows is authorized for distribution and for human consumption.
- Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria and viruses while retaining milk's nutritional properties and ensures that the milk we drink is safe.

Recommendations for Canadian dairy farmers:

DFC advises dairy farmers to heighten biosecurity measures in dairy farms to prevent possible risks associated with this new disease. The recommendations below aim to enable you to protect your farm, and are based on the proAction biosecurity measures, recommendations to [prevent an outbreak \(Being Vigilant about Animal Introductions\)](#), and guidance from CFIA.

To limit transmission from cow to cow (including cow movement):

- Closely follow heightened biosecurity practices including increased herd monitoring for signs of illness.
- Isolate sick cattle from the herd immediately.
- Avoid animal movements as much as possible. It is a good time to keep a closed herd.
- If introducing new animals to the herd is absolutely necessary, source animals from herds with a known health status. Avoid sourcing animals from areas where HPAI is present in dairy herds.
- After moving cattle, clean and disinfect livestock trailer.
- With new or returning animals: Isolate and monitor them for clinical signs for 21 days, especially if there is a risk these animals were in contact with animals from affected areas. *Farmers should update their SOP for re-introduction of cattle from the proAction program.

To limit transmission of virus (on people or objects) to cows:*Virus in milk:*

- Milk sick cows separately (last) and discard the milk. Sanitize milking equipment before using on healthy cows to avoid potential spread to other cows.
- Heat treat milk that is given to calves or any animals on farm.

Virus on people and objects:

- Inquire about the visit history of any service providers prior to allowing them access to your barn. Ask questions around farms visited, and in relation to biosecurity practices they followed for themselves and any equipment. Do not hesitate to ask questions, especially to those with equipment that have been in contact with animals or milk in other farms.
- Keep a visitor log.
- Restrict or limit visitors to your barn. If farm visits are essential, ask about travel history and consider taking increased precautions for visitors who have been in affected areas.
- Ensure only service providers that are necessary in the barn go inside, that they wear the appropriate biosecurity gear, and that they disinfect their boots and all equipment before entering.
- Delineate farmyard biosecurity zones so service provider vehicles, shared equipment or custom work do not come in contact with:
 - animals (in barn or on pasture);
 - areas in contact with tractors or tools meant for use in the barn; and
 - common areas that farm personnel commonly use
- Restrict unnecessary vehicles that move between farms.
- Ensure only clean clothes are worn around healthy bovines.
- Work with young, healthy cattle first, and with sick cattle last.
- Clean and disinfect boots and equipment after being in the sick area.

To limit transmission from cow to people on the farm:

- To reduce risks, wear gloves and mask (PPE) when handling a sick animal. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth until washing hands.
- Remove clothing worn around sick animals to be washed and shower at the end of the day.
- Wear different clothes and footwear if you must go to another barn or another farm of any type.
- Train staff and family on measures to take.

To limit transmission from water and feed sources:

- Reduce standing water near barn as much as possible.
- Wear different boots in barn than outside.
- Isolate sick cows so they do not have access to same feed or water as healthy cattle.

To reduce risk from migratory birds:

- Make the farmyard as unwelcoming to birds as you can by removing bird boxes near barns to limit bovine exposure to birds.
- Quickly clean up feed that may have spilled on the ground.
- Reduce direct contact or contamination of cattle feed or water supply by infected wild birds or other animals (eg, skunks, raccoons)
- Reduce bird access to feed supply: keep in enclosed areas, under roof or covered.
- Avoid bringing a tractor/equipment that is typically accessible to birds inside the barn.

Signs to watch for on the farm:

If you find a dead bird/wildlife on your property, do not handle it. Contact your local office of the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC).

If you detect the following symptoms or clinical signs in your herd, contact your herd vet immediately (they will then reach out to CFIA if necessary):

- Decreased herd level milk production;
- Acute sudden drop in production with some severely impacted cows experiencing thicker, concentrated, colostrum like milk;
- Decrease in feed consumption with a simultaneous drop in rumen motility; and
- Abnormal tacky or loose feces, and some fever.

Useful links:

- CFIA Information on [HPAI in livestock](#)
- How to contact your local office of [Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative \(CWHC\)](#)
- Biosecurity resources: [Preventing an Outbreak: Being Vigilant about Animal Introductions](#)