BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Agriculture and Food

# Disease Alert

**Disease:** Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

**Animals Affected:** Dairy Cattle

**Location:** Yakima County, Washington State

**Date:** October 8, 2026

**Description:** On October 8th, 2026, 2 dairy herds in Yakima County, Washington State were confirmed positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). These are the first cases of HPAI reported in Washington State. Given that cattle movements occur regularly between Washington and BC, it is important that BC Dairy producers and veterinarians are aware of this information and take necessary actions to reduce risk to the BC herd.

USDA Confirms HPAI in Two Washington Dairy Herds

**Disease information:**

HPAI was first detected in dairy cattle in Texas in 2024. In 2024 and 2025, the outbreak expanded to include over 1000 farms across the US. Since the start of 2026, the number of cases in the US has been steadily declining, although Idaho continued to detect new cases regularly throughout summer 2026. Canada has not had cases.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) requires that all lactating cattle being imported into Canada from the US test negative for HPAI (Notice to industry: Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI or H5N1) in dairy cattle in the USA - Addendum to export certificate - inspection.canada.ca). In addition, the CFIA tests bulk milk samples across Canada for HPAI (Milk sampling and testing for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Canada - inspection.canada.ca), and all tests have been negative.

Clinical signs of HPAI in dairy herds include:

- A sudden drop in milk production.
- Abnormal milk, including thickened, colostrum-like, discolored, or reduced-quality milk.
- Reduced feed intake.
- Decreased rumination and rumen motility.
- Lethargy/listlessness and reluctance to move.

## Recommendations for BC Dairy Producers:

- BC dairy producers that have had movements of lactating and non-lactating dairy cattle from Washington State onto their premises since September 24th, 2026 are requested to contact the Office of the Chief Veterinarian at chief.veterinarian@gov.bc.ca immediately.
    - OCV staff will work with any producers in this situation to evaluate risk, and where indicated, develop a plan for testing.
- As always, any producer or veterinarian suspecting HPAI in a herd must report immediately to:
    - the CFIA local district office. (Contact the CFIA by telephone - inspection.canada.ca)
    - the BC Office of the Chief Veterinarian.
- Testing for HPAI in milk samples is available at the Animal Health Centre in Abbotsford.

## Resources:

- Bird flu (HPAI) in cattle - inspection.canada.ca
- HPAI in ruminants (cattle and goats) - Province of British Columbia

BC Office of the Chief Veterinarian
Chief.Veterinarian@gov.bc.ca
Business Hours: 604 556-3003
Emergency after hours: 604 768-7586