

Hazard Warning: H5 Bird Flu Virus

H5 bird flu is widespread in wild birds worldwide and is causing outbreaks in U.S. poultry and dairy cows. Several recent human cases have been reported from U.S. poultry and dairy workers. While the current human health risk is low, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are watching the situation carefully and working with states to monitor people with animal exposures.

What You Need to Know

- Wild birds have infected commercial and private flocks of poultry, cows, and cats. Humans working with poultry and cows have contracted H5 Bird Flu in 67 cases in the United States as of January 17, 2025. There has been no human-to-human spread documented at this time.
- Of the 67 documented cases of Human Bird Flu, California (38), Colorado (10), and Washington (11) have accounted for 59 of the 67 total cases.
- Dairy Farms and Poultry Farms & Culling Operations account for 63 of the 67 total cases with California showing the problem in dairy herds and Colorado and Washington seeing more issues with poultry farms.

Protect Your Workers and Your Animals

This virus could spread from cows to people in several ways:

- Touching something contaminated with the live virus and touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Liquid contaminated with live virus splashing into your eyes (like raw cow's milk from an infected cow, for example).
- Eating, drinking, or inhaling droplets contaminated with the live virus.
- Handling sick or dead barn cats or other animals infected with the live virus.

PPE Recommendations

Everyone should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when in contact with or around dairy cows, raw milk, other animals, or surfaces and other items that might be contaminated with virus. Ask your supervisor if you have questions about what type of PPE to wear or when or how to use it.

PPE may include the following:

- Head or hair cover
- Safety goggles
- Optional face shield over the top of goggles
- NIOSH-approved[®] particulate respirator (such as an N95[®])
- Coveralls that keep you dry
- Optional waterproof apron over the top of the coveralls
- Disposable gloves with optional outer work gloves
- Boot covers or boots





Biosecurity Best Practices

Limit Visitors

- Only allow people on farm who need to be there.
- Use only one entrance and exit for the farm.
- Keep a record of all farm visitors.
- Post a "Stop: Bio Secure Area" sign next to a driveway at the entrance to a farm.

Keep Germs Away

- Give visitors disposable shoe covers to wear on the farm.
- Keep a separate pair of boots for use on the farm around your animals.
- Use a footbath with a disinfectant solution (four ounces of bleach in one gallon of water) to clean footwear before entering the farm.
- Spray disinfectant on all vehicle and trailer tires before returning to the farm.
- Don't use borrowed tools or equipment from other farms.
- Don't use untreated water from ponds or streams.

Avoid Mixing Species

- Keep other animals and strangers off the property.
- Keep livestock and pets away from other animals and birds, including bird feed, litter, or equipment.
- Keep birds out of animal pens and barns.
- Keep all wild animals (615.02 KB) (including rats and mice) away from bird and livestock areas.

Look Out for Sick Animals

Check animals regularly for the following signs of illness:

- Coughing ("barking"), sneezing, or trouble breathing
- Discharge from eyes or nose
- Difficulty moving, walking, or standing upright
- Lack of appetite
- Severe illness in multiple animals
- Sudden or unexplained deaths

IF YOUR ANIMALS LOOK SICK, TAKE ACTION.

- Isolate sick animals and report them to your veterinarian or State and Federal animal health officials.
- Your veterinarian will determine if your animals might have Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). They may contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or your state animal health official to test your animals

Sources

Review the [CDC.gov website](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information on the H5 Bird Flu

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Contact the Loss Control team at losscontrol@bhhc.com for any further questions.

