



# H5N1 “Bird Flu” Recommendations for Dairy Operators/Producers

**Situation:** Since 2022, highly pathogenic avian influenza A virus has been reported in the U.S. among domestic poultry, wild birds, cats, other small mammals, and livestock such as dairy cows. This virus is also known as H5N1 or “bird flu.”

In 2024, several H5N1 infections were reported in the U.S. among people working with raw milk from infected cows. Dairy operators can help stop the spread of this virus by carrying out measures to reduce the risk of infection among their workers.

**Potential risk to humans:** The term “highly pathogenic” avian influenza refers to the fact that this virus causes severe illness in birds. Although the virus has the potential to also cause severe illness in humans, this has not yet been observed in the current U.S. outbreak. H5N1 can be spread through unpasteurized milk or milk products – and objects contaminated by feces, litter, or other secretions of infected birds and other animals.

**Recommendations include:** Protecting farmworkers and animals, monitoring for illnesses, and ensuring your farm is prepared if an animal falls sick.

## 1. Be sure you have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) or know where to get it from a trusted source.

- Review [recommended PPE supplies](#).



[www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/worker-protection-ppe.html](http://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/worker-protection-ppe.html)

- If you have questions about PPE, contact your [local health department](#).



[www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](http://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/)

- Farmworkers should change their clothes after having contact with ill animals.

## 2. Ensure workers wear appropriate PPE when working with animals known to be or potentially infected with H5N1 – and when working with materials from those animals, such as raw milk. PPE includes these items:



### 3. Educate farmworkers about PPE and other protective measures.

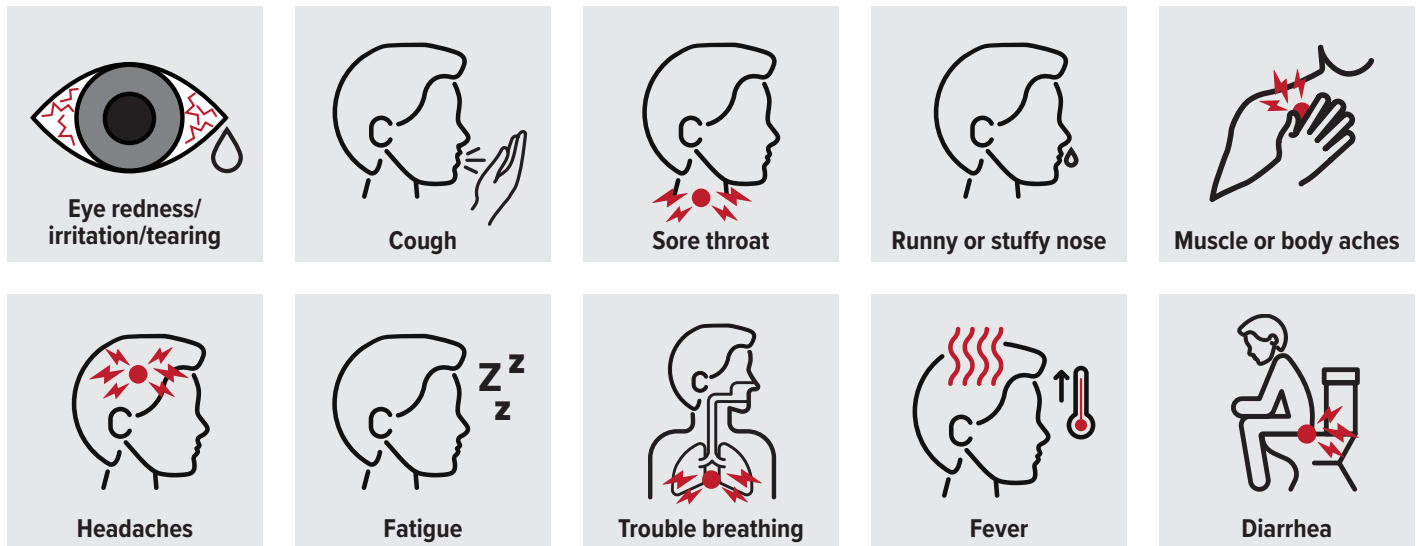
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Do not consume raw milk or raw milk products. Raw milk is never safe to drink.
- Change clothes, throw away disposable PPE, and disinfect reusable PPE after contact with ill animals.
- Get your yearly flu vaccine. This won't protect against H5N1, but it may help prevent the virus from gaining the ability to move between humans, like the seasonal flu can.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, vape, or perform any other hand-to-mouth activities without first washing hands. Take breaks in a clean area outside of the work/animal areas.

### 4. Practice good biosecurity.

- Heighten biosecurity practices to keep disease off the farm and to prevent spread on the farm.
- If you have questions, contact your veterinarian, Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) regional veterinarian, and/or U.S. Department of Agriculture Area Veterinarian In Charge.
- Limit contact with ill animals to essential personnel only.

### 5. Alert your local health department if a farmworker is exposed to a sick animal. Also contact them if any farmworker who had contact with a sick animal develops symptoms.

- Signs and symptoms of H5N1 infection in humans may include: Eye redness/irritation/tearing, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, trouble breathing, fever, and diarrhea.



### For situational updates, answers to FAQs, and safety recommendations:

USDA APHIS [webpage](#)



[www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock)

### To stay up to date on guidance:

New York State Department of Health's [website](#)



[www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/avian/](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/avian/)



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Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops