



Bovine Influenza A Virus (BIAV) - HPAI in Cattle

Authored by Lisa McCormick, Virginia Beef Center of Excellence Coordinator, Virginia - Maryland College of Veterinary Science and School of Animal Sciences, Virginia Tech; and John Currin, Associate Professor, Production Management Medicine, and Extension Veterinarian, Virginia- Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Tech.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI)

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI) virus is an emerging disease in dairy cattle. HPAI has previously only been found in poultry and other fowl. The virus in birds is known to affect multiple internal organs with a mortality rate of up to 90% to 100% (Center for Disease Control [CDC], nd). The large geographic spread of this virus is made possible through the infection of migrating bird species.

HPAI in Cattle

On March 25, 2024, the USDA reported the first detection of HPAI A virus in dairy cattle and an unpasteurized milk sample from cattle in Texas and Kansas in four dairy herds (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). This emerging disease in cattle has currently been identified in six states: Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, Idaho, Michigan, and Ohio. All cases have been suspected to have contracted the disease from migrating bird contact, although the spread of HPAI in Michigan cannot be ruled out to have been a case of disease spread from cow to cow. “HPAI in Cattle” is now called Bovine Influenza A Virus (BIAV) by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners in all messaging and resources regarding the disease syndrome in cattle in the effort to keep consistent messaging and better distinguish the disease syndrome in cattle from the pathogenesis observed in birds. NCBA is recommending keeping the name HPAI since the virus has not undergone significant mutation. Information from sources using either of these names should be considered to be referring to the same disease.

BIAV, since an emerging disease, has currently only been found in dairy cattle. Cattle producers (both beef and dairy) should monitor herds closely for cattle with clinical signs of the disease. These clinical signs include decreased milk production, reduced appetite, thickened/discolored milk, lethargy, fever, abnormal tacky or loose feces, and dehydration. If a producer suspects that there may be HPAI/BAIV in their herd they should contact their veterinarian to see if diagnostic testing is warranted. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will reimburse for any initial testing of suspect animals at NAHLN. Producers should work with their veterinarian to have samples taken. There is no recommendation to depopulate herds, since this disease “appears to be a self-limiting disease with resolution with supportive care (APHIS, 2024).”

Recommendations to limit the spread of BIAV are to heighten biosecurity practices to prevent and control disease spread with special attention to mammary health and good milking practices such as disinfection of all equipment and milking all sick cattle separately or last. Other biosecurity practices recommended by APHIS, 2024 are:

- Isolating newly added cattle when moved onto the premises.
- Avoid housing multiple species of animals together.
- Limit non-production animal access to farm areas and implement measures to exclude domestic pets (specifically cats) and wildlife from buildings.
- The Secure Milk Supply Plan offers comprehensive dairy biosecurity practices.

At this time, it is also recommended to limit movement of cattle. There are currently no federal quarantine orders or holding orders. There is a strong recommendation to minimize cattle movement as much as possible. Currently, it is suspected that pasteurization kills BIAV. The USDA is confident that the beef and dairy supply are safe. However, raw milk or raw milk product place consumers at risk of contraction.

Action Steps

H5N1/BIAV is an emerging disease and as such information and recommendations will change as new information comes to light. As new information becomes available, we will update this page.

If you observe any clinical symptoms of BIAV in your cattle herd, please contact your veterinarian for the appropriate testing and preventative measures. USDA recommends minimizing all transportation to limit the spread of disease. If transportation is necessary, make sure to quarantine animals that are newly introduced on farms, do not transport sickly animals, and test animals before transportation. The best way to limit and prevent the spread of BIAV on your operation is to uphold strict biosecurity practices. For updates on BIAV, visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock>

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