

*in Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in  
Dairy Cows 2024  
Recommendations Regarding Preventative Measures During  
Activities Involving the Gathering of Animals*

Introduction

Since spring of 2024, the virus HPAI H5N1 has been identified in several dairy facilities in the United States. The majority of cattle affected by the virus were showing a drop in milk production and milk of a thicker consistency than usual.

Seeing as the exact method of transmission between cattle has not yet been clearly established, the virus is often presented in large quantities in the milk of infected cows. Transmission of the virus within a dairy facility would take place from one cow to another through contact of contaminated milk, likely during milking time. Transmission of the virus between dairy facilities fundamentally takes place during the transportation of infected animals travelling from one facility to another. Cases of HPAI H5N1 have also been confirmed in other mammals, notably in alpacas, and goats. Cases transmitted to humans have also been identified in the United States, following close contact with infected cattle.

This document aims to inform the organisers of gatherings of animals (agricultural expositions, contests, fairs, etc.) as well as owners and handlers of the animals participating of the measures recommended to prevent the propagation of HPAI H5N1 during these events. **The control of this virus rests on the collaboration of all. The MAPAQ strongly encourages participators to follow recommendations shown below.**

Recommendations Destined to Organisers

- Verify with each owner or handler participating in the Fair if they have travelled outside of the country in the last 72 hours, if they have visited a farm in the United States, or a farm of positive HPAI cases. If any of these are the case, the person should not be authorised to participate in the event.
- Accept no animal coming from [regions in the USA, affected by HPAI](#), or having been in contact with HPAI positive animal in the last 60 days.
- Do ask for proof of vaccination for common diseases and HPAI negative test 7 days prior to Fair time for all dairy cows participating in Fair.
- Do check that all equipment coming onto the site is clean and disinfected.
- If an animal is sick, consult a veterinarian.
- Have the animal quarantine away from the Dairy Barn while waiting for the diagnosis done by the on-call veterinarian. Keep a watchful eye on all the other animals in the Dairy Barn.
- If HPAI is suspected, call 1 -844-ANIMAUX and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and follow their instructions.

Recommendation to Owners and Handlers of Dairy Animals

**BEFORE FAIR TIME**

- Avoid participating at Fair if you have been travelling outside of the country in the last 72 hours before Fair time, if you have visited a farm in the USA or a farm with HPAI positive animals.
- Respect all [travel recommendations](#) for animals coming from the USA.
- Pick healthy animals to bring to the Fair. Pick only dairy cows that have HPAI [negative test](#) (PCR analysis) 7 days prior to Fair time.

- Do not bring animals that exhibit a drop in milk production or an increase in thickness of milk (2 signs of infection by the virus).
- The chosen animals should not be in contact with cows from another farm after the HPAI test or 7 days prior to Fair time.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment you are bringing to the Fair.
- Have your exhibit cows vaccinated for common diseases (Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus (BVDV), Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis, Bovine Respiratory Syncytial Virus BRSV, Parainfluenza Virus PI3).

#### **DURING FAIR TIME**

- Handlers should have washed and disinfected their hands, wear gloves and have cleaned and disinfected their boots.
- Use only your own equipment (milking implements, halter, leads, clippers, buckets, trailer, extension cords, etc.)
  - If you must share milking implements, clean and disinfect them between each animal.
- Avoid contact between animals from different farms, including indirect contact (water troughs, feed troughs, stabling, etc.).
- NEVER offer raw milk (unpasteurized) to visitors or to other animals
- Do not dispose of milk in non-designated areas (ex: on the ground). Milk should be collected in designated tanks for lactating cows.
- Always dispose milk coming from sick animals in accordance with current regulations.
- Keep an eye for signs of the disease, and inform Dairy Division Fair Director if any of the following symptoms appear:
  - Sudden drop in milk production
  - Increase in milk thickness
  - Drop in appetite
  - Respiratory signs, including clear nasal discharge
  - Diarrhea or dry stools
  - Fatigue or fever

#### **AFTER FAIR**

- Upon return, quarantine the animals having been at the Fair for 30 days and keep an eye on their health.
- HPAI negative test should be obtained before returning an animal to the herd.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment used at the Fair.

For more information :

[www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Publications/Expositions\\_Recommandations.pdf](http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Publications/Expositions_Recommandations.pdf)

or

<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/avian-influenza/latest-bird-flu-situation/hpai-livestock/hpai-cattle-guidance>