



HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program



The Dairy Herd Status Program is a voluntary program that offers dairy producers the option to monitor their herds via weekly bulk milk samples before moving them across State lines, without having to test each individual animal. This helps support ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI or H5N1) testing to better understand the virus, further reduce the risk of spread, and meet movement restrictions.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues working together with other Federal agencies, State veterinary and public health officials, and the dairy industry to protect livestock, farms, and communities from avian influenza. The Dairy Herd Status Program is one of many measures we have taken since the beginning of the avian influenza outbreak to contain the virus.

To learn more about USDA's response to H5N1 in dairy cattle, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock.

How the Dairy Herd Status Program Works

Dairy producers who choose to enroll agree to weekly milk testing of their herds. After 3 consecutive weeks of negative test results for H5N1 at a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory, herds receive Monitored Unaffected status. Continued weekly bulk tank sample testing with negative results and participation in the Dairy Herd Status Program allows herds to maintain the Monitored

Unaffected status and move cows interstate without the additional individual animal premovement testing currently required under USDA's [April 2024 Federal Order](#).

Those herds not enrolled in the program continue to follow the interstate testing and movement requirements described in the Federal Order.

Benefits of Participation

- Monitored Unaffected herds may move cows interstate without individual animal testing.
- Sampling kits and shipping labels are provided by USDA—at **no cost** to producers.
- You can use your herd's Monitored Unaffected status when marketing, selling, or moving cattle intrastate or interstate.
- No need for added investigation if associated with a nonnegative silo sample tested as part of the [National Milk Testing Strategy](#)—ongoing testing makes your herd's health status transparent.

Enrollment

You can start enrolling in the Dairy Herd Status Program by contacting your [APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge](#) or [State Veterinarian](#). You'll work with State and APHIS officials to develop a herd monitoring plan for sample collection and testing. The date of first sample receipt at the NAHLN laboratory is the participation start date.

You may decide to cancel participation in the program at any time unless otherwise required by State regulations or a State herd plan. The cancellation should be in writing to an APHIS Veterinary Services representative or a State representative.

Herd Monitoring Plan

The herd monitoring plan is a written document that includes biosecurity, movement, sampling, and testing parameters. The plan becomes effective after it is reviewed by the National Incident Commander or their designee and signed by the APHIS Veterinary Services representative, the State representative, and the herd owner.

Herd Status Definitions

- **Provisional:** Herds enrolled in the program and in the process of obtaining Monitored Unaffected herd status.
- **Monitored Unaffected:** Herds enrolled in the program that have met testing requirements and continue ongoing monitoring that alleviates the need for premovement testing for animals moving interstate.
- **Monitored Suspended:** A temporary status for herds that have gone more than 9 days without their test results being received or reviewed. Herds may return to Monitored Unaffected status after testing is verified.
- **Monitored Presumptive Positive:** Herds enrolled and identified as nonnegative based on NAHLN testing. Herds may return to Monitored Unaffected herd status if the followup testing results are all negative.
- **Monitored Affected:** Herds enrolled that have been identified as positive based on testing. Herds may gain Monitored Unaffected herd status after completing required testing with negative results.
- **Non-Enrolled Herd:** Herds not participating in the program.

Establishing and Maintaining Monitored Unaffected Herd Status in the Program

- Herds without a history of HPAI detection must have 3 consecutive weeks of negative test results from a NAHLN laboratory on bulk tank milk (BTM) samples collected on-farm.
- Herds with a history of HPAI detection have two options:
 - Option 1—BTM samples are collected and submitted to a NAHLN laboratory for 4 consecutive weeks¹ of negative test results.
 - Option 2—BTM samples are collected and submitted to a NAHLN laboratory for 3 consecutive weeks of negative test results. In the third week, samples composed of milk from all lactating cows in the sick and fresh pens are collected and submitted with negative results.
- Once herd status is established, the producer continues to arrange for collection and submission of milk samples for weekly testing per their herd monitoring plan.

- Provided all samples are negative, no additional premovement testing is required for the animals in the herd while in Monitored Unaffected status.
- State or Federal animal health officials may review required documentation and sample collection procedures at any time.
- The producer or producer's representative continues to monitor the herd for clinical signs consistent with HPAI in dairy cattle.

Regaining Monitored Unaffected Herd Status

Below are the steps to clear your herd and regain Monitored Unaffected status after a positive test result:

- An epidemiological investigation is prioritized for any previously Provisional or Monitored herd. This enables subsequent movement restrictions for low-risk animals to resume as soon as possible.
- Option 1: On-farm samples are collected and submitted to a NAHLN laboratory for 4 consecutive weeks¹ of negative test results.
- Option 2: On-farm samples are collected and submitted to a NAHLN laboratory for 2 consecutive weeks of negative test results. Concurrent with the second weekly test, the producer collects and submits samples composed of pooled milk from all lactating cows in the sick and fresh pens. This test must also be negative.
- The herd demonstrates an absence of the following for at least 2 or 4 weeks (depending on selected option above):
 - Clinical signs
 - Production changes (such as unusual drop in milk production) associated with HPAI in cattle
 - Rates of herd illness (in particular, mastitis and respiratory disease) above expected seasonal baseline levels

While in Monitored Affected status, the herd cannot move lactating animals, as outlined in the guidance associated with the April 2024 Federal Order.

¹ Data shows that 4 consecutive weeks of negative BTM testing is sufficient to gain Monitored Unaffected status for herds with a history of HPAI detection. This is true even without testing milk from sick or newly freshened cows, which the Dairy Herd Status Program previously required for enrollment. Field data shows that BTM testing is very sensitive and positive results in BTM occur before widespread clinical illness in the herd. Therefore, it is unlikely that testing milk from sick or newly freshened cows significantly increases the chance of detecting an affected herd.