
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Statement

The recent surge in highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) cases underscores the critical need for public vigilance regarding biosecurity measures. HPAI, particularly the H5N1 strain, is highly contagious among bird populations and has led to significant outbreaks across various regions. Implementing stringent biosecurity protocols—such as restricting contact between wildlife and domestic animals, and promptly reporting any signs of illness or unusual deaths—is essential to curb the spread of the virus. These measures help safeguard public health by minimizing potential exposure to infected animals. Biosecurity is the most effective defense against H5N1 transmission, as the virus can spread through equipment, people, and animals.

Recent findings have revealed that H5N1 is not confined to avian species; it has also been detected in mammals, including domestic cats, mice and cattle. Infections have been reported in dairy cows and indoor cats, raising concerns about the virus's ability to cross species barriers.

The virus's presence in diverse animal species heightens the risk of mutations that could facilitate easier transmission to humans. Therefore, public adherence to biosecurity measures, such as avoiding contact with sick or dead birds and ensuring proper hygiene when handling poultry products, is imperative to prevent potential outbreaks and protect public health.

If you find sick or dead wildlife please contact 310-0000 to report and if intervention with wildlife please contact our hotline at 403-214-1312.

For further information please visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/h5n1-avian-influenza-in-alberta>

