



CDQAP Advisory: CDPH Recommendations for Dairy Employees on HPAI-infected Herds

Monday, April 22, 2024 9:26 AM

Dear Industry and Regulatory Partners,

Dr. Annette Jones our state veterinarian and CDFA's Director of Animal Health and Food Safety Services requested that we forward the message below and the attached letter to our partners. It contains good information relative to what to expect from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) should we start to see cases of HPAI on California dairies. CDPH an important regulatory partner to CDQAP and CMAB and we have worked closely with the Department on such issues as preventing contaminated illegal cheese and keeping employees safe during COVID and periods of wildfire smoke.

Page 3 of the attached letter contains the CDPH specific recommendations. The highlights are:

- CDPH is recommending that producers make preparations to protect their employees should HPAI be detected on dairies in California. These recommendations mirror recommendations made by [CDC](#) for farm workers. See CDC's [infographic](#) on this.
- On infected farms CDPH will recommend that producers provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to employees who enter enclosed areas that house known or potentially sick animals or their manure or excretions.
- Depending on the circumstances, this could include at a minimum N95 masks and potentially additional [protective PPE](#) particularly for workers in enclosed spaces or hospital pens. This could include goggles or [faceplate respirator](#) (potentially [fit-tested](#)), disposable Tyvek-like coveralls, gloves and hat or hair cover.
 - *CDQAP note: The sole case to date of a dairy employee infection is reported to have been inflammation of the eyes, likely from contact with milk from an infected cow in a hospital pen. Knowing that viral load in infected cows is highest in the milk, the most important of these PPE items listed above would appear to be splash goggles and a N95 mask, particularly for those employees coming in close contact with milk.*
- Employees that have had contact with known infected animals need to report flu or head cold-like symptoms to their manager who will contact the local health department.
 - *CDQAP note: Reporting potential cases to the local health department ensures the employee can tested (at no cost) to rule out HPAI. In the unlikely event the employee has been infected, and antiviral medications (such as Tamiflu®) and have been stocked and are available.*



- As always, steps should be taken to help prevent employee consumption of raw milk from the farm.

Although the CDPH's recommendations may seem overwhelming at first glance, producers can reassure their employees that the risk of contracting the virus is minuscule or, on an uninfected farm, nil.

Over the last several years we have depopulated some 60 million commercial poultry flocks due to HPAI and only a single poultry employee contracted the virus, developing transient cold-like symptoms. Similarly, of the 29 known infected dairy herds in the U.S., there has only been a single worker that has developed conjunctivitis. Both employees were working on a known infected flock or herd and both recovered nicely. In spite of an aggressive sampling program among employees on such operations these are the only two detected cases.

HPAI in cattle has not been detected in California so the PPE precautions described above are not at this time required on our dairies. The CDPH is simply cautioning producers of what might be recommended or required in the future. In the event that HPAI is detected on California dairies, CDQAP will work with our regulatory and industry partners to develop accessible outreach in both English and Spanish.

As always thanks for your continued support of our partnership. Michael.

Michael Payne DVM, PhD
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California – Davis
<https://cdqap.org>
<https://www.wifss.ucdavis.edu>
530-304-9306
mpayne@ucdavis.edu