



CDQAP ADVISORY: Media Information on Governor's HPAI Proclamation and Viral Spread

December 19th, 2024

Good Morning Industry & Regulatory CDQAP Partners,

Yesterday Governor Newsome [signed](#) a *Proclamation of a State of Emergency* related to the ongoing HPAI outbreak in dairy herds and poultry flocks in California. See the attached copy of the proclamation.

Many of you have been fielding media inquiries asking in essence “*Does this mean the outbreak is somehow worse or more dangerous?*”. The short answer is “no”. Media inquiries also inevitably raise the issue about how the disease is spread and “*Why haven’t we been able to control it in California?*”.

Below is information in bullet point format which may be useful as you address public concerns.

These messages are ***NOT*** official responses from CDFA and should not be referenced as such. All the information below however have been reviewed by the Department for factual accuracy. The information below has been used to respond to inquiries from the NY Times, the LA Times, USA Today, CNN and other outlets.

RELEVANT INFORMATION RELATED TO GOVERNOR’S HPAI EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION

- Emergency proclamations or declarations can take place at three different levels: at the local level (a county proclamation), the state level (a Governor’s proclamation) and a national level (a Presidential emergency or disaster proclamation).
- For more background on emergency proclamations see the attached document: *Emergency Proclamations – A quick reference guide for Local Governments*. This reference was developed in collaboration with Cal-OES and is part of the training materials used in our UC Davis [Animals in Disaster](#) training delivered in rural communities throughout the U.S. See [here](#) for more information on the training, which is funded through the U.S Department of Homeland Security.



- At their core these emergency declarations or proclamations can be used to direct and empower government agencies and employees to commit resources for any emergency, whether it is a wildfire, earthquake, flooding, or in this case, an animal disease outbreak.
- It makes additional emergency funding available and it can cut through an enormous amount of red tape. Such additional resources can elevate and quicken the response, which is a good thing. During a disaster these proclamations can be critical to mobilizing emergency resources. They can be a god-send to responders.
- It is unlikely this most recent Governor's proclamation will change the fundamental aspects of how state agencies (including CDFA and CDPH) will respond to the current HPAI outbreak. Both of those agencies have already been responding appropriately and aggressively. In a livestock outbreak of this size however, resources can become stretched. This Governor's proclamation is assuring that these and other sister agencies have the resources needed to continue to address the outbreak. This is one reason the Governor's office has appropriately characterized it a "[proactive action](#)".
- Finally, fundamentally nothing has changed relative to the rate of spread among herds or the number of infected dairy workers. Human infection remains extraordinarily infrequent and infected ag workers recover quickly. Neither has the safety of the food supply changed. Pasteurized product remains as safe as it always has been, pretty much as safe as you can make any food.

RELEVANT INFORMATION RELATED TO HPAI VIRAL SPREAD

- The Influenza family of viruses in animals and people are known in general to be transmitted in a wide variety of ways, aerosol droplets from coughing and sneezing, bodily excrements like urine and manure, even simple mechanical transfer on inanimate objects such as boots, tires or doorknobs. We have strong epidemiologic evidence that movement of infected cows to naïve herds has spread the disease. Laboratory research specifically into this cow version of influenza also strongly suggests that the virus can be spread between cattle through nose-to-nose contact and during the machine milking process.
- Our field experience however, with dairies and flocks employing outstanding biosecurity measures is that many have still frustratingly become infected. This suggests there may be more going on.
- It's for this reason that California and USDA are investing heavily into field studies looking at potential spread through "[peri-domestic](#)" species, wildlife living on or near our livestock and



poultry operations. Species of interest include animals like rodents, opossums, skunks and non-migratory birds such as starlings, pigeons and sparrows. There is similar interest in flying insects and even mechanically on dust plumes carried on the wind.

- As a whole, we learned an enormous amount about how when, where and how the HPAI virus “spilled over” from migratory water fowl into cattle, and how the initial spread of the virus was promulgated. We may still however have much to learn about additional ways the virus might be being spread through our domestic species.

As always, we are grateful for the continued collaboration and support from our regulatory, industry and academic partners.

Michael

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