

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 12 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: H5N1 INFLUENZA IN CATTLE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since the March 25, 2024 detection of influenza virus type A, genotype H5N1, clade B3.13 in a Texas dairy cattle herd, the virus has been detected in hundreds of cattle herds in 14 states. Spillover of this virus has occurred into commercial and backyard poultry flocks. The virus has also been detected in humans.

To minimize the impact of this H5 influenza virus on the health and welfare of poultry and to protect human health, the American Association of Avian Pathologists has identified several policy issues and gaps that should be immediately addressed:

The narrow requirement of pre-movement testing of only lactating dairy cows moving interstate is inadequate and overlooks risks that other classes of cattle pose to poultry. This approach does not sufficiently mitigate the risk to turkeys, broilers, and egg laying hens near infected dairies.

- A national strategy that targets all potential hosts of H5 influenza is lacking and has led to continual spread of the virus.
- As this is an emerging outbreak, insufficient data have been available to identify transmission pathways and associated risk factors for H5 influenza spread (i.e., spread between dairies and poultry farms).

The extensive and rapid dissemination of H5 influenza in dairy herds has created a new source of virus in livestock populations. Vaccination is an important tool to reduce disease spread within dairies and to other animals (i.e. poultry, swine, cats, etc.)

- The occurrence of H5 influenza in a new livestock species increases the demand for lab capacity, producer financial support, and veterinary resources.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association strongly urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Services to lead the coordination of all livestock sectors, state animal health officials, and public health officials to develop and implement a consistent and comprehensive strategy for H5 influenza management. The strategy should include these elements:

- Risk-based regional surveillance to efficiently generate the data needed to understand risks and to mitigate them with consistent control strategies.
- Adherence to science-based principles of disease control to reduce further spread of H5 influenza.

- Epidemiologic studies and tools to understand connections among susceptible populations.
- Resolution of concerns, such as trade, that impede the utilization of vaccine needed to control the spread of H5 influenza.
- Additional resource allocation to minimize the long-term impacts of H5 influenza on human health, food security, and economic sustainability.