



April 1, 2024

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christin Kamm  
402-471-6856

### **NDA ISSUES RESTRICTIONS, PROVIDES UPDATE ON HPAI ILLNESS FOUND IN LIVESTOCK**

**LINCOLN** –The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) continues to monitor the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus in dairy cattle. HPAI has been detected in lactating dairy cattle in Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Michigan, and Idaho. At this time, there have been no reported detections of HPAI in Nebraska dairy cattle or other livestock.

In an effort to protect the dairy herd in Nebraska, NDA is issuing an importation order effective immediately. The importation order will require all breeding female dairy cattle entering the state of Nebraska to obtain a permit issued by NDA prior to entry. To obtain a permit, producers will need to contact the NDA at 402-471-2351. The new importation order will be in place for 30 days (until April 30, 2024) and will be re-evaluated at that time. More information is available on NDA’s website at [nda.nebraska.gov/animal/imports](http://nda.nebraska.gov/animal/imports).

“Animal health and disease control are essential to the livestock industry and health of Nebraska’s economy,” said NDA Director Sherry Vinton. “NDA is closely monitoring this HPAI illness in livestock. We will do what’s right to advocate for Nebraska producers, to protect the health of Nebraska livestock, and to minimize the impact HPAI will have on dairy producers in the state.”

“The health and safety of livestock in Nebraska is top priority,” said State Veterinarian Roger Dudley, DMV. “At this time, it appears the HPAI illness found in dairy operations in some states only affects lactating dairy cows and is not being seen in other segments of the cattle industry. Now, more than ever, is the time to enhance biosecurity measures on farms and ranches to help protect livestock from illness.”

NDA recommends adhering to strict biosecurity practices in operations and quarantining new animals into herds for 30 days, if possible. If dairy producers notice symptoms - acute sudden drop in milk production, changes in milk color/consistency, decreased feed intake, and other clinical signs, they should contact their herd veterinarian and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture immediately at 402-471-2351. The herd veterinarian will assess these animals and consult with NDA for additional steps.

-more-

In the dairy industry, there are many safeguards in place to ensure that milk and dairy products are safe to consume, so HPAI in dairy cattle does not possess a known risk to the public's health. Pasteurized milk and dairy products are safe to consume due to routine testing and established protocols. Out of an abundance of caution, milk from ill cows is never allowed to enter the food supply.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), dairies are required to send only milk from healthy animals into processing for human consumption. Milk from impacted animals is diverted or destroyed so that it does not enter the food supply. In addition, pasteurization has continually proven to inactivate bacteria and viruses, like influenza, in milk, and pasteurization is required for any milk entering interstate commerce.

NDA is collaborating with producers, veterinarians, officials in other State Departments of Agriculture, the USDA, and industry partners like the Nebraska Dairy Association, and the Nebraska Cattlemen, to closely monitor the situation and put plans in place to protect Nebraska producers and their livestock.

“There are a lot of discussions on the national level about this outbreak, and Nebraska is a part of those discussions,” said Dr. Dudley. “Understanding the details surrounding the transfer of the HPAI virus to livestock is an important part of the epidemiological investigation. While troubling, this outbreak does not currently threaten the lives of dairy cattle, and the pasteurization process continues to keep the milk supply safe. In Nebraska, we have communicated with dairy producers and veterinarians with the information we know, and we will continue to provide updates as the situation evolves.”

The HPAI virus detections in affected herds appears to have been introduced through exposure to infected wild birds. Further efforts to continue epidemiological investigations are underway to ensure a complete picture of the situation can be evaluated. The USDA has confirmed that HPAI does not seem to be passed cow-to-cow, but rather by wild birds carrying the disease and transmitting it and potential mechanical transmission of the virus.

While this new importation order prohibits breeding female dairy cattle from entering the state without a permit, individuals from Nebraska interested in transporting animals and animal products to other states and countries should contact the destination state/country to learn about their import requirements before transporting animals.

To learn more about biosecurity measures to implement on your operation, please visit:

[https://nda.nebraska.gov/animal/diseases/hpai\\_livestock/index.html](https://nda.nebraska.gov/animal/diseases/hpai_livestock/index.html)