

Ohio Pork Council H5N1 Virus Updated Background & FAQs

Current Situation

- On Oct. 30, 2024, USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) [confirmed](#) a positive case of a strain of H5N1 influenza virus in a pet pig from a small backyard farm in Crook County, Oregon.
- The small homestead had chickens, ducks, goats, sheep, and other livestock on the premises, but wild migrating birds are thought to be the vector involved in infecting the pig found to be positive.
- While none of the pigs showed clinical signs of disease, the four remaining pet pigs on this site were euthanized, along with all poultry. Ongoing testing at NVSL will reveal if the other swine test positive for H5N1 or not. The people onsite were also tested and were found negative for influenza of any type.
- Regardless of additional findings, this case in swine poses absolutely no threat to human health—and all pork in the United States remains safe to eat!
- Due to the facts and circumstances of this case, federal swine health officials at USDA and elsewhere do not see a need for pork producers (commercial or show pig) to adopt any new disease mitigation measures. However, they reiterate the ongoing need for [disease surveillance](#) and adhering to [strict biosecurity protocols](#) that they should already have in place with input from their swine veterinarian.

FAQs

1. What is H5N1?

H5N1 is a strain of influenza A virus that is adapted to avian species. This virus is commonly referred to as avian influenza virus.

2. Why are we interested in this virus?

An avian influenza virus infected poultry in 2014-2015, resulting in the loss of more than 50 million birds. Since early 2022, a second outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza has affected more than 104 million birds in the U.S. In March 2024, the H5N1 virus spread from wildfowl to dairy cattle in Texas and has since spread to herds in multiple states.

3. Has H5N1 been found in swine?

H5N1 has been found in wild birds, poultry flocks, several species of wild terrestrial and marine mammals, neonatal goats, dairy cattle in the U.S., and as of October 29, 2024, in swine.

4. What actions does the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) take when a case of H5N1 is confirmed in swine?

NPPC stands ready to collaborate closely with state and federal regulators and industry stakeholders. A rapid response program will be initiated to disseminate timely updates and guidance to industry stakeholders.

5. How can pork producers protect swine from H5N1?

Pork producers implement biosecurity practices to minimize the introduction of a variety of health threats. These practices not only safeguard the health and safety of the animals, but also reduce potential risks to employees and the public. Producers are encouraged to work with their veterinarian to ensure their plan is as effective as designed. Plans should address prevention of contact with other species including wild fowl.

6. How will a producer know if their pigs have become infected with this strain of influenza?

There is an active surveillance program in place today (has been in place since 2009) to monitor influenza viruses in swine. The diagnostics available to detect swineadapted strains of Influenza are also capable of identifying avian-adapted strains like H5N1.

7. Can a person become infected with an influenza A virus from swine?

While human infections from swine are rare, cases have been reported in the past, often associated with exposures at county fairs.

8. Can a person catch influenza from handling and eating pork products?

No, according to the CDC, humans cannot contract influenza from handling or eating pork products. There are no food safety concerns associated with influenza transmission through pork.

9. Are there concerns about the trade implications of this H5N1 situation for the pork industry?

Currently, there are no trade implications related to pork exports due to H5N1. NPPC is closely monitoring the situation. Countries are encouraged to adhere to international scientific standards determined by the World Organization for Animal Health.

10. Which federal agencies are involved with this response?

The US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is leading this response from the animal health perspective while coordinating closely with FDA concerning milk and animal feed safety. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is monitoring this incident from a public health perspective.

11. Can you elaborate on the role U.S. pork producers play in influenza surveillance and how it benefits public health?

For nearly two decades, U.S. pork producers have actively participated in the Department of Agriculture's influenza surveillance program to enhance animal and public health by sharing crucial information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and animal and public health officials. The [swine influenza surveillance program](#) is designed to identify influenza viruses circulating in swine, proactively detect reassortment viruses that could impact public health, and gain knowledge to contribute to improved animal health diagnostics and vaccines.

Additional H5N1 Resources

[*APHIS Announcement: Federal and State Veterinary Agencies Share Update on HPAI Detections in Oregon Backyard Farm, Including First H5N1 Detections in Swine*](#)

- [*APHIS Influenza A Swine Surveillance Program*](#)
- [*Biosecurity for Pig Farms*](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Detections in Livestock](#) – APHIS puts information here about detections in livestock, biosecurity, and other resources. APHIS posts confirmed detections of HPAI in livestock by 4:00 p.m. ET each day.

[CDC Interim HPAI Guidelines](#) – Covers the virus in animals with recommendations for prevention, monitoring, and more.

[FAQs on HPAI in Dairy Herds](#) – A new resource from APHIS that covers HPAI in dairy in detail and answers common questions.

[Secure Pork Supply Biosecurity Checklists](#) – A collection of best practices for indoor- and outdoor-raised pigs to provide additional protection from disease threats and transmission.