

2024 H5N1 KEY MESSAGES

As the agricultural community continues to learn about the impact of H5N1 on lactating dairy cows, exposure must be limited for everyone. Dairy farmers are focused on keeping their livestock healthy, which means keeping them on the farm to limit disease transfer. Pasteurized dairy products are safe and healthy, as always.

Anticipated FAQs

Why aren't you calving at the CHS Miracle of Birth Center this year?

Out of an abundance of caution and because pregnant cows are not able to be tested for the H5N1 virus until they give birth and produce milk, no live dairy calf births will take place at this year's CHS Miracle of Birth Center. Once the cow gives birth she will begin lactating, she is then subject to the testing requirement, and since she is on-site, we would not be able to follow the timeframe outlined by the Board of Animal Health. Our priority is to keep our livestock and fair visitors healthy and safe.

Check back next year for our calving exhibit.

Other than no live cattle births, are there any other changes in the CHS Miracle of Birth Center?

Visitors should continue to expect an educational experience about the vital role that animal agriculture and veterinary medicine play in the state of Minnesota. The birthing center will continue to offer opportunities for visitors to see the "miracle of birth" for sheep, pigs and poultry and may even be able to see video of a calf birth from previous years. There will be different breeds of dairy calves as well as a non-lactating cow. There will also be some beef cows and calves. All of which will provide an extended learning experience.

Why are there lactating dairy cows in the milking parlor and not the CHS Miracle of Birth Center

The dairy industry remains vigilant in monitoring animal health and implementing biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including H5N1. Minnesota requires all lactating cows to have a negative H5N1 test result and Certificate of Veterinary Inspection to attend the State Fair or any exhibition in Minnesota. Cows in the parlor have tested negative and are closely monitored.

- The parlor is not open to the public, but rather is a viewing experience for fairgoers which gives another layer of protection for those cows.
- The parlor follows biosecurity protocols and has a backflush system that uses an iodine-based solution to clean and disinfect the equipment after each cow is milked

H5N1 Talking Points –

The dairy industry remains vigilant in monitoring animal health and implementing biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including H5N1. Dairy farmers are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of their dairy animals. Pasteurized milk and other dairy products are safe to consume. As the USDA, FDA and CDC note, there continues to be no concern about the safety of the commercial milk supply because of both the pasteurization process and that milk from sick cows is being diverted or destroyed. Minnesota requires all

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Background

Virus

- H5N1 is a virus affecting dairy cattle herds in Minnesota and across the nation.
- H5N1 is the same virus that causes highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry.
- The virus is in cows' raw milk and can spread easily through direct contact (exposure to the milk directly) or indirect contact (other animals, vehicles or other objects).
- Dairy cattle are tested for the virus via a milk test.
- Dairy cattle symptoms:
 - Decreased herd-level milk production
 - Sudden drop in production with some severely impacted cows experiencing thicker, concentrated, colostrum-like milk
 - Decrease in feed consumption
 - Abnormal feces
 - Lethargy, dehydration and fever
- The risk of humans contracting H5N1 from animals remains low. However, the virus has spread to humans who work or have direct contact with sick animals. They experience mild symptoms (eye redness, mild flu-like symptoms, fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, fatigue).

Testing

- The [Minnesota Board of Animal Health](#) requires that lactating dairy cattle attending any exhibition in Minnesota, including the MN State Fair, have a negative H5N1 test no more than 7 days prior to the exhibition and a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection.
- The animal can move in intrastate on a negative test for 10 days.
- The test is conducted on a milk sample that must be taken or overseen by a veterinarian.