



July 9, 2024

Dear Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Partners,

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) are committed to supporting our dairy industry amidst the ongoing H5N1 avian influenza outbreak. Although only four human infections have been reported in the United States so far, we are concerned about the health of dairy workers and those handling raw (unpasteurized) milk. Our primary goal is to safeguard your workers' health and, by extension, the vitality of the dairy industry. One tool to help accomplish this goal is usage of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The CDC has developed [Recommendations](#) for worker protection and PPE use to reduce exposure to avian influenza. We understand that these recommendations may be challenging to implement in many settings. While using all recommended PPE offers the greatest worker protection, we recognize this may not always be feasible. Therefore, we have created a tiered approach to minimize infection risk based on farm conditions. At a minimum, please use, gloves, eye protection, and a face covering when handling raw dairy products or coming in close proximity to cattle. As the situation evolves, this guidance may change as we learn more about H5N1 in cows.

For all dairy workers, especially those in contact with raw milk or in close proximity to cattle:

When there are **no clinically affected animals and no confirmed infection on the farm:**

- Wash hands thoroughly after any contact with animals or animal products (milk).
- Avoid touching your face.
- Choose PPE based on comfort and/or health status of worker. (see Table 2)
- If a splash occurs to your face or eyes, immediately remove PPE, clean well with water and soap, and reapply clean PPE.

When there are **clinically affected or H5N1 positive animals on the farm:**

- Continue to follow all above recommendations.
- Wear the best quality of PPE available. (see Table 1)

The increased level of PPE used when there is clinically affected or H5N1 positive animals on the farm should continue until a negative H5N1 PCR test is reported by PDA. Workers at high risk of severe illness, including those who are pregnant, lactating, over the age of 65, or have chronic immune-suppressing, respiratory, or cardiac conditions, should consider best-quality PPE (Table 1). If animals test positive for H5N1, DOH will conduct short daily wellness checks by phone for exposed workers until 10 days after their last exposure.

To support you, the DOH has a supply of PPE (N/KN-95 masks, surgical masks, face shields, goggles, coveralls, gowns, and gloves) available at no cost. The PDA is supporting the distribution of this PPE supply. This initial and limited quantity of PPE will be made available to farms to ensure farms have immediate access to protective equipment. To order PPE, use this [link](#), call PDA at 717-772-2852, or email RA-ahds@pa.gov. Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced [funding](#) to help farms procure more PPE for longer duration responses.

If there are other ways we can assist you during this ongoing situation, please do not hesitate to contact the PDA at 717-772-2852 or the DOH at 1-877-724-3258. Thank you for your partnership and dedication to health and safety.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of K. Russell Poller in blue ink.

Secretary of Agriculture

Handwritten signature of Debra L. Boger MD in blue ink.

Secretary of Health

Table 1. Animal(s) with consistent clinical signs or confirmed H5N1 on the farm, BEST quality PPE

Best Quality PPE	Gloves	Unvented/ indirect vented goggles or face shields	NIOSH-approved respirator (e.g., N95 filtering facepiece respirator or elastomeric half-mask respirator)	Disposable coveralls or reusable clothing removed onsite and laundered daily, dedicated/disinfectable boots, or removable boot covers, not to be worn at other farms.
-------------------------	--------	---	--	---

Table 2. Animal(s) with NO clinical signs of H5N1 on the farm, use PPE based on worker comfort and health status.

Good Quality PPE	Gloves	Safety glasses with side protection	Surgical mask	Dedicated clothing and boots worn only onsite and laundered daily, not to be worn at other farms.
Fair Quality PPE	Gloves	Safety glasses	Gaiter or cloth covering	Dedicated clothing and boots, not to be worn at other farms.