



Risk of HPAI from Wild Birds Still Present

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In late January 2025, raw milk surveillance in the U.S. detected a new strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), D1.1. This strain has been seen in wild birds and domestic flocks in Canada. The few dairy herds in the U.S. in which this strain has been detected may have become infected from contact with infected birds rather than other infected cows.

This highlights again the need for farms to include biosecurity measures that reduce the risk of cows being exposed to HPAI from infected birds.

You may recall that, originally, such recommendations were included in notices before it became apparent that the greatest risk of HPAI spread between herds was either directly from the movement of infected cows or indirectly from movement of people or livestock handling tools that had been in close contact with infected cows. As a result, biosecurity practices to prevent the spread of HPAI between dairy herds had focused on the importance of minimizing direct and indirect spread from infected cows.

The discovery of D1.1. strain in dairy herds reminds us to take precautions to **reduce risk from migratory birds** as listed below:

- Make the farmyard as unwelcoming to birds as you can by removing bird boxes near barns to limit bovine exposure to birds.
- Quickly clean up feed that may have spilled on the ground.
- Reduce direct contact or contamination of cattle feed or water supply by wild birds or other animals (e.g. skunks, raccoons)
- Reduce bird access to feed supply: keep in enclosed areas, under roof or covered.
- Avoid bringing a tractor/equipment that is typically accessible to birds inside the barn.

Moreover, continue keeping an eye out for signs of diseased birds and wildlife in your area and notify the [Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative \(CWHC\)](#).

If barn cats start manifesting neurological signs, this can also be an early indication of a possible bird flu infection in your herd as cats may well manifest symptoms of infection before cattle. Contact your veterinarian if you see neurological signs. Remember they could still be a manifestation of other diseases such as rabies, so always ensure the safety of anyone who is dealing with an animal that is acting abnormally.