



JEFFERSON COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2025

Jefferson County Officials Aware of New HPAI Case; Continuing Coordinated Response with State Agencies

JEFFERSON, Wis. – Jefferson County officials are aware of a new non-negative test result for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) at a second facility located within the county. This result came after surveillance testing of that poultry flock.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) remains the lead entity coordinating the response. Their Public Information Officer can be reached at (608) 910-1929 or molly.mueller@wisconsin.gov

News of this second confirmed case is understandably difficult for everyone involved, especially the affected farm(s) and their neighbors. County officials want to reassure the public that numerous local, state, and federal partners are working closely together under the coordinated response led by DATCP. These efforts have been underway since the initial detection and will continue as we work to safeguard both the agricultural community and the public.

Testing of birds is being handled by DATCP for poultry and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for wild birds. Results of those tests are shared with the Jefferson County Health Department (JCHD) for distribution to local healthcare providers, affected farm(s), and the public.

Testing and monitoring of employees is the responsibility of JCHD, which is charged with preventing any transmission of HPAI among humans. This is done through direct outreach, preventative personal protective equipment (PPE), education, and symptom monitoring. If directed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, testing for symptomatic individuals is conducted, and antiviral medications or vaccines can be distributed. Many times, this is done if there is evidence of human infection or an increased risk of human-to-human transmission.

Depopulation is handled by the affected facility(s) under their own plans, in consultation with and under the guidance of the appropriate state and federal agencies, including DATCP and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Disposal of impacted poultry or other birds is coordinated by DNR. For large depopulation events, this is generally handled through composting. According to DATCP, "Compost piles are regularly inspected by staff from the farm, the DNR, and DATCP for any evidence of leakage, odor, and disruption. The full composting process takes approximately 30 days from final construction and involves daily monitoring to ensure the compost is reaching the optimum temperature to deactivate the virus. Windrows will reach temperatures exceeding 130° F for at least 72 hours, and is sufficient to inactivate many pathogens, including avian influenza. After the composting process is complete and the compost has been released by DATCP, the compost will be removed from the premises at the discretion of the landowner."

Groundwater testing: After the May 2022 HPAI event, JCHD worked with DHS and State Lab of Hygiene to obtain approval for no-cost groundwater testing for nearby landowners. JCHD is again working with DHS to get similar approval, and if it is granted, JCHD will provide well-water test kits to homeowners residing near the compost site. This will be done in collaboration with the Town Chair. There will be an initial test to collect a baseline sample and a follow-up test at a later date. Both must be conducted following strict test collection protocols. During the May 2022 event, a total of 18 samples were originally submitted, but 11 of those residents did not submit a follow-up sample. Four of the initial 18 samples were also submitted incorrectly. JCHD and DHS did offer additional opportunities for testing to those residents. It is important that if testing occurs for this new event, any residents with questions on how to collect a valid sample should contact JCHD or DHS.

Traffic control and road closures/restrictions are managed by the appropriate unit of government. For Town roads, the Town Board makes these decisions. If restrictions are needed on County or State highways, the County or State will take the lead. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin State Patrol, and Jefferson County Highway Department are actively involved, providing equipment and personnel to ensure compliance with new traffic patterns. Routes to and from affected facilities or composting sites are carefully selected in coordination with the County, Town, DATCP, and facility operators. These routes are chosen to comply with weight limits, minimize safety concerns, and prevent unnecessary traffic disruptions. Your cooperation with these traffic changes is essential to ensure the response moves forward as quickly and effectively as possible.

Additional support is being provided by Jefferson County Emergency Management, Jefferson County Administration, Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation Department, and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). The County has been and remains in regular communication with the affected facilities, local, state and federal agencies, and municipal partners throughout this process. Jefferson County continues to work collaboratively with all partners to ensure that every step of the response is conducted in the best interest of our county and its residents.

County officials encourage residents with any questions or concerns to contact DATCP or to visit their website at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/HPAIWisconsin.aspx

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