



The WeCAHN Dairy Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 to discuss the animal health events occurring April to June 2024, with veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, and industry representatives in attendance.

## Report Contents:

1. Dataset Overview
2. Interesting Cases
3. Meeting takeaways

### 1. Dataset Overview

Data sources in this report include:

- i. Clinical Impressions Surveys completed by network practitioners.
- ii. Data shared by western veterinary diagnostic laboratories: Manitoba Veterinary Services Diagnostic Laboratory (VSDL), Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), and University of Calgary College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).

### 2. Interesting Cases

#### i. HPAI in dairy cows

**Background:** Influenza A(H5N1) in dairy cattle is a continuously evolving issue. Between March 25<sup>th</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, there were 208 confirmed cases in 14 states; this includes the recent detection of influenza A (H5N1) in California.

**USA most up-to-date information can be found here ([LINK](#)).**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has in place requirements for testing of lactating cattle prior to importation from the US. are new requirement for Canadian cattle returning from the US after a stay of less than 60 days ([LINK](#)) and for cattle and bison imported from the US for a temporary stay in Canada ([LINK](#)). The CFIA started a pilot project testing processor bulk tank milk for influenza A. The CFIA has also begun a 4<sup>th</sup> round of retail milk testing.



Animal Health Canada (AHC) published biosecurity recommendations for Canadian fairs and exhibits ([LINK](#)). **Advisory: CFIA “advises against all Canadian cattle travelling to and participating in agricultural exhibitions in the US at this time” ([LINK](#)).**

The provincial plans to respond in the event of a positive test of influenza A(H5N1) in dairy cattle:

MB – The attending vet will get back to the producer, build a biosecurity plan, and stop the movement of cows.

SK – Developed a response plan with SK Milk. Currently plan to request don’t move cows until 30 days after no signs of illness.

AB – Promptly implement a stop to the movement of cows. The provincial public health authority will follow up with people who may have been exposed and guide them regarding monitoring symptoms, testing and when to seek medical care.

BC – The producer is required to take actions to:

- i. Protect the health of workers
- ii. Protect the health of bulk tank milk graders conducting milk pick-up
- iii. Ensure food safety
- iv. Prevent the transmission of disease to other livestock and poultry farms
- v. Initiate a voluntary stop to the movement of cows on and off the premises for 30 days; BCDA can support producers in instituting it.
- vi. Authorized movement of a limited number of animals may be permitted on a case-by-case basis by the CVO under certain conditions.

**Canada (CFIA) most up-to-date information can be found here ([LINK](#)).**

A risk assessment was released by the Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (CEZD) on The Risk to Dairy Cattle in Canada from Avian Influenza A(H5N1) in Dairy Cattle in the US ([LINK](#)):

- i. Importation of infected dairy cattle is of higher concern compared to cattle transport trucks and wild migratory birds
- ii. The risk of importing an infected dairy cow is small because of import conditions (i.e., a lactating cow must test negative for influenza A before transport from the US)
- iii. More information is needed on the number and movements of cattle transport between the US and Canada
- iv. More information is needed on the true number of affected herds in the US (lactating vs. non-lactating, and infected and showing signs of sickness vs. infected and not showing signs of sickness)

## ii. *E. coli* diarrhea

Diarrhea is a common digestive disease in dairy cattle and *E. coli* is a common cause of diarrhea.

Some types of *E. coli* can cause disease in humans so they are monitored. The diagnosis of *E. coli* infection and disease depends on isolating *E. coli* during culture, characteristic tissue lesions, and clinical picture. It can be challenging to get a true diagnosis of *E. coli*. For these reasons, it is important to contact your veterinarian to diagnose bacterial infections.

## iii. Lead toxicity in a cow

**Background:** A downer cow was diagnosed with lead toxicity; this is reportable to the Chief Veterinary Officer in Alberta. There were no elevated lead levels in the samples collected from other cows at the farm. It is unknown how this cow had such high levels of lead. (for additional information, see: [Alberta.ca](#))

**Toxicologist during the WeCAHN Beef Network 2024 Q2 meeting:** The whole herd needs to be tested because it is possible that an animal has a high lead level but no acute or chronic signs ([Waldner et al., 2002](#)).



## Meeting takeaways:

- i. Active surveillance initiatives (pre-determined collection of samples) for influenza A(H5N1) in processor bulk tank milk have been implemented in the USA and Canada.
- ii. A risk assessment by the Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (CEZD) on The Risk to Dairy Cattle in Canada from Avian Influenza A(H5N1) in Dairy Cattle in the US concluded that the importation of infected dairy cattle is of higher concern compared to cattle transport trucks and wild migratory birds.



- iii. *E. coli* is a type of bacteria that can be found in animals and in people. Diagnosing *E. coli* as the cause of disease depends on the clinical picture, results of bacterial culture, and changes in the affected tissues (e.g., intestines). Therefore, it is important to consult with your veterinarian to diagnose bacterial infections.

Financial support was provided under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.