



The WeCAHN Poultry network held a quarterly virtual meeting on May 28th, 2026. Network members discussed animal health events from January to March, 2026. Veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, public veterinarians, researchers, and industry representatives attended the meeting.

1) Overview

Data sources in this report include:

1. Clinical Impressions Survey completed by network practitioners.
2. Data shared by western veterinary diagnostic laboratories: Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) laboratory, Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS) laboratory, and University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).
3. Scan: poultry surveillance reported by other sources or networks.

2) Interesting Cases

Clinical case: Severe muscle disease in commercial turkeys

- A commercial RWA turkey farm in British Columbia experienced repeated outbreaks with high mortality in birds 8–11 weeks of age.
- Heavier birds were most affected with gas present in the breast and thigh muscles, dry muscle tissue, and bleeding, while the skin remained normal.
- Laboratory testing identified *Clostridium septicum* (the cause of malignant edema in cattle) as the cause.
- Repeated outbreaks and failed antimicrobial treatments suggested that litter quality and stocking density may have contributed to the problem.
- No vaccine is currently available for poultry, highlighting the importance of good flock management and early diagnosis.



Case study: Skin disease in commercial laying hens

- High mortality occurred in Lohmann White laying hens on farms in Saskatchewan and Alberta with unusual flightiness, feather loss, wounds, and severe skin damage.
- One flock developed a bloodstream infection, some outbreaks occurred with other intestinal diseases, while one had no obvious trigger.
- Advanced laboratory testing confirmed the emerging bacterium *Staphylococcus agnetis*.
- Mortality decreased after affected hens were treated with a topical disinfectant spray, and management changes were implemented to reduce stress and improve flock health (including anticoccidials, parasite control, and probiotics).
- Research is continuing to better understand this emerging disease and the role of stress, nutrition and gut health.





3) Syndromic Surveillance

Important information

Clinical impression surveys

Never; **Rarely** = 1-2 times per 3 months; **Commonly** = 1-2 times per month; **Very frequently** = 3+ times per month.

'Control charts'

Control charts are a simple way of presenting data collected over time (e.g., increasing or decreasing detection frequencies). Each data point reflects the number of positive samples or cases reported by a diagnostic laboratory over 3 months (quarter of a year). The upper and lower horizontal lines are called control limits. Individual points lying outside the control limits (special cause or unstable point) suggest a need for investigation to determine whether/how significant a signal they represent.

Respiratory disease

- Infectious bronchitis, infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT), and *Mycoplasma* were reported **never** to **rarely** and were generally stable across commercial flocks.
- *Mycoplasma* remained **commonly** reported in small flocks and was stable.
- Other respiratory diseases in turkeys were reported **rarely** and were **stable**.

Laboratory results: At PDS, isolated detections of *Mycoplasma* spp. and *Mycoplasma synoviae* (MS) remained within control limits. Inclusion body hepatitis (IBH) detections decreased from the previous quarter but continued an overall increasing trend. At VDS and UCV M DSU, only sporadic cases of ILT and other respiratory diseases were identified, with no findings exceeding control limits.

Digestive disease

- Coccidiosis, necrotic enteritis, enteritis, and peritonitis were reported **rarely** to **commonly** and were generally stable.
- IBH was reported **commonly** to **very frequently** in broilers and was increasing.
- Infectious bursal disease was reported never to **rarely** and was **stable** to **increasing**.
- Histomoniasis (black head) was **never** reported.

Laboratory results: Laboratory findings remained within expected levels. *Enterococcus cecorum* was the most common bacterial finding and increased at UCV M compared with the previous year. *E. coli* remained within control limits across laboratories. Sporadic cases of *Clostridium perfringens*-associated necrotic enteritis and bacterial hepatitis were identified.

Reproductive disease

- Bacterial bloodstream infections in broiler-breeders were reported **commonly** to **very frequently** and were **stable** to **increasing**.
- Bacterial peritonitis and salpingitis in layers were **commonly** reported and **increasing**.
- Infectious hatchability problems and infectious bronchitis affecting egg production were **never** reported.

Laboratory results: At PDS, one chicken was diagnosed with salpingitis and peritonitis associated with *E. coli* and *E. faecium*.

Musculoskeletal disease

- Bacterial lameness in broilers and broiler-breeders was reported **commonly** to **very frequently** and was **stable** to **increasing**.
- Viral and developmental causes of lameness were generally **never** reported.
- Reovirus tenosynovitis in turkeys was never reported.

Laboratory results: At PDS, osteomyelitis (bone infection) exceeded the upper control limit, while polyserositis and synovitis remained within control limits.

Multisystemic and metabolic disease

- Yolk sac infections and bacterial infections were reported **rarely** to **commonly** and were generally **stable** to **increasing**.
- Aggression and feather pecking were reported **rarely** and were generally **stable**, although early mortality from other causes increased in small flocks.
- Fowl cholera, fowl pox, and Salmonellosis were **never** reported.
- Marek's disease continued to be **commonly** reported in small flocks, while late bacterial infections **increased** in turkeys.

Laboratory results: At PDS, increased *Staphylococcus saprophyticus* detections remained within control limits. Colibacillosis and other bacterial bloodstream infections remained within control limits across laboratories. Sporadic cases of heart disease, yolk sac infections, omphalitis, and rickets remained within expected levels. Two ducks tested positive for influenza A (H5). Salmonella detections remained within control limits overall, although several Salmonella enterica types were identified in turkeys at VDS.

4) Poultry Condemnations for Federally Inspected Plants

Data sourced from [PDF - 050P Poultry Condemnation Report by Species for Federally Inspected Plants - Agricultural Industry Market Information System \(AIMIS\)](#)

Condemnation data from processing plants should be interpreted with caution because inspection decisions can vary and some condemnation categories are not clearly defined. WeCAHN will continue to monitor these data and provide regular updates to identify long-term trends.

- Condemnations due to abdominal edema continued to increase in Alberta and Saskatchewan/Manitoba, while British Columbia showed a small increase but remained at lower levels.
- Condemnations due to emaciation (severely underweight birds) increased in AB during the first quarter of 2026 but remained uncommon in SK/MB and BC. Historically, BC has had higher rates of these condemnations than the other western provinces.
- Condemnations involving skin issues continued to increase across Western Canada.
- Liver-related condemnations remained highest in BC and continued to increase in SK/MB. These trends will continue to be monitored over time.



5) Scan of emerging and important diseases

i. **Quebec** reported a PCR detection of *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG) on a non-quota commercial poultry farm during investigation of low-level mortality with minimal clinical signs, consistent with chronic MG infection.

ii. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1

Canada:

- [HPAI Detections in BC Wildlife and Environmental Surveillance](#) Dashboard
- Between April 14 and May 16, the [CFIA](#) confirmed HPAI in 10 poultry premises (3 in Alberta and 7 in Saskatchewan). 5 commercial and 5 non-commercial.
- **Dairy cattle:** No HPAI detected in Canadian cattle.
 - As of May 11, 2026, the CFIA laboratories tested 9,810 raw (unpasteurized) milk samples at processing plants; all samples were negative for HPAI ([LINK](#)).
- **Other animals:** Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture confirmed a fatal case of HPAI in a cat ([Saskatchewan Government](#) and [CBC News](#)). This was a rural cat with outdoor access and a history of scavenging a dead wild goose.

USA:

- **Dairy cattle:** Between April 20 and May 20, 2026, there were 13 new cases of HPAI in Idaho. The total is 1,106 confirmed cases in 19 states ([LINK](#)).
- **Poultry:** Between April 20 and May 20, 2026, there were 8 commercial and 5 small flocks affected by HPAI ([USDA-APHIS](#)).
- **Humans:** No new cases of avian influenza A(H5) in people in the USA since 2024 (n=71). Forty-one (57.7 %) infections were associated with exposure to affected dairy cows, and 24 (33.8 %) with exposure to infected poultry ([LINK](#)).

Europe: [Summary of overall HPAI situation](#)

- CEZD reported: "While most of Europe is experiencing a decline in HPAI, Poland is experiencing an intensification, with 117 outbreaks reported in commercial flocks as of early May, and ~2 million birds affected."

iii. US multi-state *Salmonella* outbreak – April 2026

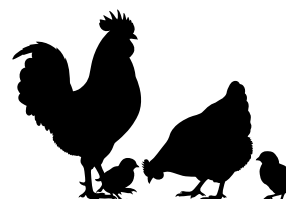
- [US CDC](#): public health officials in several states are investigating 3 outbreaks of *Salmonella* illnesses linked to contact with backyard poultry.
- Starting in January and as of May 4, 2026, 184 people from 31 states were infected. Outbreak strains include *Salmonella* Enteritidis (32 people), Mbandaka (19 people), and Saintpaul (133 people).
- Patients in the S. Saintpaul outbreak more frequently reported contact with Pekin ducks.
- Most people reported getting poultry from agricultural retail stores. The outbreak strains have been linked to 5 hatcheries. CDD is working with the hatcheries.

iv. New World screwworm

- NWS continues to be reported in [Mexico](#), mainly in cattle and dogs, with detections within 50 km of the Texas border.
- First US detections since 1966 were confirmed in Texas and New Mexico ([USDA Link](#)), triggering livestock [import restrictions](#) for affected states.

v. Newcastle disease virus in Europe

- A CEZD presentation to the CAHSS Poultry Network highlighted increasing Newcastle disease outbreaks in vaccinated commercial flocks. Possible contributing factors include reduced vaccine effectiveness, gaps in biosecurity, the emergence of more virulent virus strains, and persistent reservoirs in pigeons and cormorants. Increased testing associated with HPAI surveillance from concurrent outbreaks may also be influencing detection rates.
- New outbreaks in Spain and Poland ([WattPoultry](#), May 12, 2026)
- United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) [Updated Outbreak Assessment #4: Newcastle disease \(ND\) in Europe 30 March 2026](#)



6) Other Network Updates

Manitoba: Highly Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) vaccine trial is scheduled to begin in Manitoba. The first phase involves a layer flock which will be placed on August 4, 2026. The flock will be monitored for its full 80-week life cycle. A second phase will involve a turkey grower flock and it is planned to commence in 2027.



Producer takeaways

1. A serious *Clostridium septicum* muscle infection caused repeated turkey losses over multiple growing cycles on the same farm. Good litter management, appropriate stocking density, and early investigation of unusual mortality are important because there is no vaccine and treatment has limited success.
2. An emerging *Staphylococcus agnetis* infection caused severe skin wounds, feather loss, unusual flightiness and blood infections in laying hens. Washing lesions, reducing stress, and improving flock hygiene can help lower risk.
3. Most poultry diseases remained at expected levels, but producers should continue watching for inclusion body hepatitis, bacterial lameness, and bacterial infections in breeders and layers, and investigate increases in mortality or lameness promptly.
4. Avian influenza (H5N1) continues to circulate in poultry and wild birds in Western Canada. Remain vigilant. The New World Screwworm continued to spread through Mexico and reached the Southern US. Learn to identify signs of infection to act quickly.

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