

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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# FSIS NOTICE

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## FSIS H5N1 INFLUENZA A DAIRY COW TESTING PROGRAM

### I. PURPOSE

This notice provides information and instructions to Public Health Veterinarians, Supervisory Consumer Safety Inspectors, and Consumer Safety Inspectors regarding the testing of dairy cows for H5N1 Influenza A under the National Residue Program (NRP).

### II. BACKGROUND

A. On September 16, 2024, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will implement an H5N1 monitoring program of dairy cow carcasses. This initiative aims to provide continued assurances on the safety of the beef supply destined for human consumption and information on the presence of the virus in asymptomatic dairy cows.

B. This new program will analyze skeletal muscle samples that will be collected from dairy cow carcasses under FSIS' NRP surveillance sampling program. Over the next year, approximately 800 muscle tissue samples taken from carcasses of asymptomatic dairy cows will be tested for H5N1. This testing will be conducted by FSIS Eastern Laboratory in Athens, Georgia.

C. Carcasses that test positive for H5N1 will not be released into commerce; they will be purchased by USDA for research purposes. APHIS may also conduct additional traceback activities to gather epidemiological data and prevent the spread of H5N1.

**NOTE:** FSIS has made personal protective equipment (PPE) available and provided instructions for inspection program personnel (IPP) in the event they need to protect themselves from exposure to dairy cattle or associated materials originating from a herd affected by H5N1 Influenza A or any dairy cattle that shows signs, pathologic findings, or any other indications suggestive of H5N1 while performing inspection: [H5N1 Information](#).

### III. INSTRUCTIONS

A. During the next weekly meeting with establishment management, IPP are to discuss the testing of dairy cows under the NRP for H5N1, when conducting NRP sampling in dairy cows. IPP are to discuss the following:

1. The program will allow USDA to monitor the presence of H5N1 in asymptomatic dairy cattle and assist partners in understanding the virus in these animals;
2. Muscle samples collected from dairy cows under the NRP will be utilized for this program, so no additional samples will be taken;

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3. Establishments are to hold carcasses until all results are reported;
4. Sample results will not be released until H5N1 results become available; and
5. Hold times will not increase due to the expanded sampling protocol.

B. Sampling will be assigned, and results will be reported, through the Public Health Information System.

C. For samples found violative for residues, IPP are to follow disposition instructions found in [FSIS Directive 10800.1](#), *Residue Sampling, Testing and Other Verification Procedures Under the National Residue Program for Meat and Poultry Products*.

D. For samples found positive for H5N1, IPP are to retain the carcass and FSIS Headquarters (HQ) will provide instructions to IPP on how to handle the carcass.

#### IV. QUESTIONS

A. Refer questions related to the H5N1 sampling program through supervisory channels to FSIS HQ.

B. IPP are to refer questions on NRP sampling to their immediate supervisor or to the Office of Policy and Program Development through [askFSIS](#) or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, complete the web form and select **Residue** as the Inquiry Type.

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.



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