

July 25, 2024

To: Minnesota State Fair Dairy Cattle Exhibitors

Re: Dairy Cattle Changes for the 2024 Minnesota State Fair

To protect our state's livestock and minimize the potential spread of the H5N1 virus, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health (BAH) released [exhibition requirements for lactating dairy cattle](#) on June 18, 2024. We have continued to monitor the situation as the summer and county fair season have progressed.

The Minnesota State Fair wants to express our gratitude for your continued commitment and passion for showcasing your dairy cattle. We know you invest significant effort, time and dedication in preparing for these events and we understand the challenges this evolving H5N1 situation presents to you, your animals and our state.

We are writing today to share details on what you can expect at this year's Minnesota State Fair:

### **Dairy Cattle Shows**

- Open Class, 4-H and FFA Dairy Cattle Shows will be held as scheduled and follow the guidance and requirements of the BAH.
- In its most recent communication, dated June 18, 2024, the BAH outlines these requirements, namely that all lactating (currently producing milk) dairy cows being brought to an exhibition are required to have a negative test for H5N1 and have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI).
  - Negative tests must be received from a lab that is a participant in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) such as the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) in St. Paul. A veterinarian must oversee the collection of samples or collect samples themselves from each animal traveling to the exhibition within **seven days** before arriving at the show.
  - Once a negative result is received for an animal, it can move within Minnesota for **10 days** from the sample collection date to locations specified on the CVI. If going to multiple exhibitions within that time, all locations where the animal is unloaded must be indicated on a CVI.
  - The CVI can act as a record of negative test if test information is included on the document.
- At the State Fair, veterinarians will inspect cattle in their stalls as in past years. At that time, health paperwork (including the CVI listing the Minnesota State Fair and proof of negative H5N1 test) must be turned in, and vets will check ear tags to ensure they match the paperwork. (Please note that State Fair veterinary staff do not have the capacity to check health papers at the gate as trailers arrive, so inspections will be done in stalls.)
  - Any animal arriving without the proper paperwork (i.e., no test result, expired test result) will immediately be sent home.
- A licensed veterinarian is on the fairgrounds 24 hours a day. They will be immediately available to inspect dairy cattle exhibiting any symptoms of diseases, including H5N1, during the Minnesota State Fair. If you have an animal showing any symptoms, please notify your department superintendent in the Cattle Barn office to get in contact with the Minnesota State Fair veterinarian.
- The Minnesota State Fair will issue refunds to exhibitors with a positive H5N1 test if they notify us in writing (mail or email) by Aug. 25 that they will not be showing.

### **Testing Timeline**

- The negative H5N1 test is only valid for 10 days. Additionally you need a CVI listing your destination(s).
- Start with the last day your animal will be at the fair. This is Day 10.
- Count back 10 days. This is the earliest your vet can pull a sample. Consider same-day personal or courier delivery to the lab for faster results. Note: Labs are not open over the weekend or holidays.
- Your results will be returned in no more than three lab business days.
- If your animal will be at the exhibition past Day 10 (including longer events or travel to multiple exhibitions), additional samples will need to be planned for and submitted in the appropriate timeline.

More ⇨

### Example of lactating dairy cattle testing timeline

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
EXTENSION

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				<b>0</b> TEST DAY	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> TO FAIR/ EXHIBITION	<b>7</b> FAIR START	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> HOME						

### Additional Testing

- The Minnesota State Fair will offer testing at the fairgrounds for animals returning for the open class or FFA shows, or those 4-H animals whose 10 days will end while they are still at the fair.
- Testing will be available at morning milking in the parlor on specific dates. Exact dates to be determined but there will be at least one, and in some cases two, per encampment
- Testing will be overseen by the State Fair veterinarian. Samples will be pulled by University of Minnesota vet students.
- Samples will be transported the same day to the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for testing on lab business days. Results should be returned the next day.
- There is no charge for testing at the fair.
- Animals would not need a new CVI to return home as long as all locations are listed on the original CVI.

### Late county fairs

- Any lactating cows from late county fairs potentially going to the Minnesota State Fair need to retest while at their fair, so they have an eligible test result for exhibiting and staying at the State Fair. If they plan to show at all three state fair shows, a cow may need to be retested three separate times. It is simplest to use a calendar and back 10 days for each test needed to fulfill the requirement.
- For example: Exhibiting at McLeod County Fair and then showing only 4-H weekend at the State Fair, they will have to retest while at McLeod County Fair as early as Friday, August 16 to have another negative result by Wednesday, August 21 and arrival at the State Fair; which will then be valid through Sunday, August 25. If they stay at the State Fair through FFA weekend, they will need to have a third test while at the State Fair.

### Biosecurity risks to attending

- Just like any year, there are biosecurity risks to attending fairs and exhibitions because animals from different species, breeds and ages are brought together on a different premises. The stress of travel, confinement and a new environment can also make animals susceptible to illness.
- You are the best advocate and protector for your herd's health. Work with your veterinarian, practice good biosecurity, weigh your options and carefully consider what makes sense for your animals.
- [Biosecurity recommendations for attending exhibitions](#) is a helpful resource from USDA when going to shows or events
- BAH also has [biosecurity recommendations for exhibitors](#) that we share with you every year and are included in our premium books.

### What happens if a cow tests positive while at the State Fair?

- If a lactating dairy cow tests positive while at a show, the affected animal and livestock and poultry from the same premises will be sent back to the origin premises and quarantined along with the rest of the herd.

- BAH will initiate a disease investigation and conduct bulk tank testing (or other approved testing if no bulk tank is available).
- Be certain to read this important overview of the [BAH H5N1 response to a positive case at an exhibition](#) for more details and other aspects of BAH's disease investigation.
- Review the [state's basic quarantine process and requirements](#) during an H5N1 detection.
- See [BAH H5N1 in Dairy Frequently Asked Questions](#) for detailed information on BAH's quarantine testing protocol and answers to other questions.

### **Milking Parlor**

- The State Fair milking parlor will be open for use as usual by exhibitors. The parlor has a backflush system that uses an iodine-based solution to clean and disinfect the equipment after each cow is milked. A spray-on teat dip will be available for use along with single-use towels. Strip cups will be disinfected after each use.
- Exhibitors can choose to bring their own milking equipment for their lactating dairy cows. For biosecurity purposes please DO NOT share milking equipment with other exhibitors.
- Milk will be collected in dump tanks located between the Cattle Barn and the Annex and disposed of in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. ALL milk must be dumped safely in these tanks. **DO NOT dump milk down any drains, sinks or in the wash racks.**
- Exhibitors will have access to hot water outside of the milking parlor in the rear holding area to clean their equipment.

As we navigate this ever-evolving situation the information above is subject to change.

We recognize that these changes may be difficult, and that each exhibitor must make the best decision for their unique situation. If you choose not to exhibit at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair, we completely understand and look forward to welcoming you back in 2025.

Competition Department  
Minnesota State Fair

Please refer to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health's website for more information about H5N1 in livestock (<https://www.bah.state.mn.us/h5n1>).

### **If you have more questions, contact:**

- For registration information or questions, please contact the Minnesota State Fair Competition Department at [competition@mnstatefair.org](mailto:competition@mnstatefair.org) or 651-288-4417.
- For questions about H5N1, testing or Minnesota Board of Animal Health Requirements, please contact BAH at [animalhealth@state.mn.us](mailto:animalhealth@state.mn.us) or 651-296-2942.