

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 8, 2024

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION REQUIREMENT CHANGES FOR DAIRY CATTLE

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced an intrastate testing requirement for lactating dairy cattle participating in livestock exhibitions in Illinois to minimize the spread of H5N1 (highly pathogenic avian influenza).

While Illinois currently has no reported cases of H5N1 in dairy cattle, 12 states have confirmed cases, and this step is being taken out of an abundance of caution. Testing requirements apply to lactating dairy cattle being exhibited at county fairs, Illinois State Fair, Du Quoin State Fair and any other livestock exhibition held in Illinois.

The IDOA testing requirements are as follows:

- a. All lactating dairy cattle must have a negative Influenza A virus, (IAV), test before arriving at a livestock exhibition in Illinois. Exhibitions include county fairs and State Fairs, and other exhibitions where dairy cattle are exhibited.
- b. Testing must be conducted by a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory. The University of Illinois Veterinary Diagnostic lab is a NAHLN laboratory.
- c. The animals must be sampled no more than seven (7) calendar days prior to the date of arrival at the exhibition.
- d. The negative test must be brought to the exhibition. All test results are animal specific; the animal identification tag on the animal must match the identification on the test results.
- e. If one animal in a herd tests positive, no other animals in the herd shall be permitted to attend exhibitions for at least 30 days.
- f. If one animal being exhibited from a herd has not been tested, all animals in the herd shall be ineligible for exhibition.
- g. All positive tests must be reported to IDOA.

“The safety of our State Fair exhibitors and their animals is our number one concern,” **said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II.** “Our hope is to reduce the risk of disease by implementing these proactive measures.”

The effective date of this change is July 17, 2024, and applies to all livestock exhibitions in the State occurring on or after July 17, 2024.

For county fairs that have started but not ended prior to July 17, testing will be required as follows: (1) if the livestock will not arrive on premises or have the exhibition until July 17 or later, the testing requirements will apply to those livestock; (2) if the livestock have already been exhibited as of July 17, no testing will be required for that exhibition. It is the responsibility of the exhibition to check for these tests.

The United States Department of Agriculture has [several financial assistance options](#) for exhibitors, including waiving the laboratory fee, and assisting with veterinarian sample collection fees and shipping reimbursement.

“Our best defense against animal disease is biosecurity,” **said Dr. Mark Ernst, IDOA state veterinarian.** “We are committed to working closely with all stakeholders – from veterinarians and testing labs to exhibitors and fair managers – to identify and implement best practices to limit or prevent the spread of disease.”

Please visit our website, agr.illinois.gov, for additional information including an [FAQ document](#) covering approved labs in Illinois, guidance from labs on how to obtain tests and information about the cost of tests.

###

DAIRY CATTLE EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS FAQS:

1

Do all dairy animals being shown need tested?

The requirement only applies to lactating cows that are being exhibited. Dry cows, heifers, bulls and other stock do not need tested before exhibition.

2

How far out from exhibition does my test need to be completed?

A test on lactating dairy cattle, for any exhibition within Illinois, must be conducted within seven (7) days of the event. This means that the date the samples are obtained must be within seven (7) days of your arrival to the event.

3

What if my cow is going from one fair directly to another?

If you will be arriving at both fairs within the 7-day window of your sampling date, no additional testing will be required. If that timeframe cannot be met, you must arrange to have a veterinarian sample and submit before arriving at the next fair. To facilitate this process, the University of Illinois will have veterinarians onsite at the Illinois State Fair capable of conducting this sampling and submission.

4

Who will collect my sample?

An accredited veterinarian, or someone under their direct supervision, will collect the sample. However, the sample must be submitted under the veterinarian's name and account. Sampling procedure and submission information can be found at [VDL News - Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory \(illinois.edu\)](http://VDLNews-VeterinaryDiagnosticLaboratory.illinois.edu). Please note that once the lab receives the samples it can take 48-72 hours to receive results, so timing needs to be considered to complete and receive results within 7 days of the event.

5**Where will the samples be tested?**

Samples must be run at a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) approved lab. The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine's Diagnostic Laboratory is the only approved NAHLN lab within Illinois. Please visit [VDL News - Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory \(illinois.edu\)](http://vdlnews.vetmed.illinois.edu) for more information. Samples may be sent to an out-of-state laboratory if the veterinarian chooses. A list of NAHLN labs can be found at [NAHLN Laboratories \(usda.gov\)](http://naahln.labs.usda.gov). We encourage the owner or veterinarian to check with the lab before submission to ensure they are not backlogged due to the testing requirements in many states and potential overlap of exhibition dates.

6**I was told that I must have a premises identification number for testing. Where can I get this number?**

If you already have a PIN but need confirmation of the number, you can email the Department at AGR.PREMISES@illinois.gov. If you need to apply for a PIN, please find the application and instructions at [fillable-premiseform-2019.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](http://fillable-premiseform-2019.pdf).

7**What is the cost of testing?**

The costs will vary for producers based on veterinary charges and shipping costs. However, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing the testing at NAHLN labs free of charge. Also, producers can apply to the USDA for reimbursement of veterinary and shipping costs. Please visit [USDA Support for Producers with Affected Dairy Premises](http://usda.gov/support-for-producers-with-affected-dairy-premises) to obtain more information on this process.

8**Do I have to test before I go home?**

Testing to return home is not required. However, we encourage exhibitors to isolate all animals that were exhibited before return to remainder of herd. We also encourage all exhibitors to practice biosecurity at the fair and home. More information is available at [Cattle Exhibition Health Tips.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](http://cattle-exhibition-health-tips.pdf) and [Dairy Biosecurity Recommendations for HPAI and More \(illinois.gov\)](http://dairy-biosecurity-recommendations-for-hpai-and-more).

9**Do exhibitor requirements only apply to the Illinois State Fair and Du Quoin State Fair?**

No, this testing requirement applies to any County Fair or other livestock exhibition in Illinois from date of effect until it is repealed.

10**What do I do with test results?**

Producers will need to show a paper or electronic copy of the tests for each animal onsite at the exhibition. Please note that the animals must be officially identified and the ID in the ear must match what is on the test results. For the Illinois State and Du Quoin State Fairs, identification with an 840 tag is the only acceptable method of ID. If you do not have a test or the ID does not match, you will be sent home with all animals in your string.

11**What happens if an animal tests positive?**

Anyone with a positive test will not be allowed to exhibit any animals. A representative from the Department will reach out to discuss next steps of a disease investigation.

12**Have there been any detections in Illinois?**

No detections of H5N1 in dairy cattle have occurred in Illinois to date. However, detections have occurred in 12 states and continue to occur. State, federal and industry partners must work together to protect the industry.

END

EXHIBITION ANIMAL TESTING PROTOCOL FOR LACTATING DAIRY COWS

1

Identify any lactating animal that will be exhibited at the event.

2

Ensure each animal has an official identification.

- Please note for Illinois and Du Quoin State Fair this must be an 840 tag.
- If you do not have any official ID available, you can contact the Department to order 840 tags or speak to your veterinarian regarding officially identifying at time of test.

3

Make sure your farm has a premises identification number (PIN).

- If you are unsure of your PIN, email AGR.PREMISES@Illinos.gov
- If you need to apply for a PIN, visit [fillable-premiseform-2019.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#).

4

Contact your herd or local veterinarian to schedule testing.

- Sampling must occur within 7 days of arrival at event.
- The veterinarian will schedule a time to visit and submit samples to accommodate the 7-day time frame.
- Lab turnaround time is 48-72 hours. Schedule your visit with your veterinarian to ensure you have adequate time to get sample collected, submitted and results received within the 7-day window.

5

The veterinarian, or someone under their direct supervision, will visit the farm to collect the appropriate samples.

- Milk samples will be collected. The samples should be submitted in a leak proof container such as screw cap tube.
- Samples must be obtained from each quarter. The sample volumes of each should be a total of 3-10ml volume.
- Do not pool multiple cows; individual samples are submitted to the lab. The lab will pool as appropriate.

- Please visit the selected NAHLN lab website for further sampling information.
- Ensure all the animals' official ID's match what is recorded on the test.
- The veterinarian will submit to a NAHLN lab, and the testing will be conducted at no cost.
 - Producers should visit [USDA Support for Producers with Affected Dairy Premises](#) to apply for additional support in the form of reimbursement for veterinary and shipping costs.

6

Maintain record results to provide at exhibition.

- The veterinarian will receive results, and in some cases, the owner may receive them directly. Otherwise, reach out to your veterinarian to obtain a copy of the test record.
- Place copy of tests with other necessary documentation for exhibition. Owner must be able to provide exhibition staff with a paper or electronic copy of the results.

The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Laboratory is the National Animal Health Laboratory Network approved lab within Illinois. You can visit their website at [VDL News - Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory \(illinois.edu\)](#) to gather more information regarding submission to their lab. You may also visit [NAHLN Laboratories \(usda.gov\)](#) to identify other approved labs and reach out to them directly regarding submission and turn around times.