

MEMO

Avian Influenza Protection for Farmworkers

May 13, 2024

Workers on dairy farms, poultry farms and in slaughterhouses may be at higher risk of exposure to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which may lead to infection. While both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continue to note that HPAI risk for human infection is low, proper personal protection equipment (PPE) may reduce the chance of viral exposure should it be in the environment or herd.

Farmworker protection is a priority of the CDC, who have asked states to make PPE available to farmworkers. Distributions to farms with a cow(s) confirmed to be infected with avian influenza or those with a cow awaiting test results are the priority. Currently, there are no known confirmed or suspect HPAI infections in North Dakota cows. Should farms choose to implement, the CDC provided recommendations on PPE use to reduce exposure of workers to HPAI viruses that can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h5/worker-protection-ppe.htm>. North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) recognizes that PPE market supplies are adequate with the current demands. However, to ensure PPE is available for farmworker protection, HHS is offering PPE acquisition assistance. If requested,

- HHS may assist farms by providing a one-time distribution of PPE from the state stockpile if supplies cannot be obtained commercially.

Dairy farms needing assistance should reach out to their state dairy inspector who will assist with HHS coordination of services at 701-328-2655. For questions about CDC's guidance on PPE use, call 701-328-2378.