

# Bird flu found in dairy cows in Texas, Kansas and New Mexico

March 26 2024, by Robin Foster

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Milk from dairy cows in Texas, Kansas and New Mexico has tested positive for the presence of bird flu, U.S. officials say.

In a [news release](#) issued Monday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed the virus is the Type A H5N1 strain, known to cause [outbreaks](#) in birds and to sometimes infect people.

"As of Monday, March 25, unpasteurized, clinical samples of milk from sick cattle collected from two [dairy farms](#) in Kansas and one in Texas, as well as an oropharyngeal swab from another dairy in Texas, have tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza," the USDA said in its statement.

Still, the agency noted the risk to humans remains low.

"Based on findings from Texas, the detections appear to have been introduced by [wild birds](#)," the agency said. "Initial testing by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories has not found changes to the virus that would make it more transmissible to humans, which would indicate that the current risk to the public remains low."

On top of that, only milk from healthy animals is allowed to enter the food supply, and milk from the sick animals is being diverted or destroyed, the USDA noted. Pasteurization also kills viruses and other bacteria, and the process is required for [milk](#) sold through interstate commerce, the agency added.

The news comes a week after Minnesota officials [announced](#) that goats on a farm where there had been an outbreak of bird flu among poultry were also diagnosed with the virus.

Dairy farmers in Texas first became concerned three weeks ago when cattle started falling ill with what officials called "mystery dairy cow disease," Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller told the Associated Press. Milk production fell sharply and the cows were lethargic and weren't eating much.

"We hadn't seen anything like it before," he noted. "It was kind of like they had a cold."

Experts say livestock appear to recover on their own within seven to 10 days. That's different than bird flu outbreaks in poultry, which typically require the killing of flocks to eliminate the [virus](#). Since 2022, outbreaks have led to the loss of about 80 million birds in U.S. commercial flocks, the AP reported.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [bird flu](#).

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