

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.

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