



H5 bird flu

Tips for pastoralists

H5 bird flu

H5 bird flu has been detected in wildlife in Australia and has caused significant impacts to wild birds, poultry and other animals overseas.

Wild birds and other wildlife can carry and spread the virus. Properties with dams, floodplains, wetlands, water points or areas frequented by wild birds may face a higher risk of exposure.

While infections in cattle and other livestock are uncommon, strong biosecurity practices can help protect your animals, working dogs, staff and business.

What you can do

AVOID - If you see sick or dead birds or other wildlife, do not touch them.

RECORD - Record your location and what you see. Take photos if safe.

REPORT - Report multiple numbers of sick or dead wild birds or other wildlife using the online form at nt.gov.au/birdflu or if it is urgent call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Risk to humans

Infections in people are rare. Bird flu does not easily spread to people, and no infections of this strain have been reported in people in Australia.

Staying away from sick or dead birds and wildlife is the best protection. Infected animals shed the virus in secretions, faeces and other body fluids, and into the air. Getting an annual flu vaccination is recommended.

Protect yourself - PPE

If you find dead birds, avoid touching or moving them unless they are located near the stock feed or water area or if advised the carcasses do not need to be collected or tested, and you need to move or dispose of it.

Protect yourself by wearing:

- waterproof disposable gloves
- P2/N95 respirator or surgical mask
- eye protection, such as safety goggles
- long-sleeved clothing
- enclosed shoes.

If possible use a shovel to remove the carcass and disinfect shovel afterwards.

After handling, remove PPE carefully and wash hands thoroughly. Do not touch your face until your PPE has been removed and your hands have been cleaned.

Working dogs

Bird flu infections in dogs are rare.

Protect them by:

- keep dogs away from dead birds and wildlife
- supervise dogs during mustering and hunting
- contact your veterinarian if your dog is unwell and had contact with sick or dead birds.
- do not feed dogs raw wild birds, raw poultry or other potentially infected animal products.



Avoid.
Record.
Report.

For more information visit birdflu.gov.au or nt.gov.au/birdflu



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Protect your cattle and property

The Australian Government High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Preparedness Taskforce assessed the risk of H5 bird flu infection in beef cattle, sheep and goats as negligible, and the risk in pigs as low.

Good biosecurity reduces the risk of bird flu and many other livestock diseases.

Secure feed and water sources

- Stock feed where wild birds cannot access it.
- Protect feed sheds from bird contamination.
- Where possible minimise wild bird access to lick blocks, feed bunks and supplements.
- Use deep bore water or enclosed tanks rather than untreated surface water where practical.
- Fence off high-risk wetlands and dams when feasible.
- Consider bird deterrents or covers on smaller troughs.

Reduce contact with wild birds

- Keep stock away from areas where large numbers of waterbirds gather.
- Reduce standing water around yards and infrastructure.
- Restrict access to wetlands or floodplains heavily populated by waterbirds when possible.

Clean equipment and vehicles

Disease can spread on contaminated equipment and footwear. After moving between paddocks, yards or high-risk areas:

- clean and disinfect vehicles
- clean boots and footwear
- wash clothing and equipment
- remove mud, manure and organic material before disinfection.

Monitor animal health

Observe all animals for changes in behaviour, appetite or signs of diseases. Report any sudden or unusual deaths immediately. Work with your veterinarian to maintain regular health checks.

Signs to watch for in livestock

Although bird flu infections in livestock are generally rare, stay alert for:

- sudden drop in feed intake
- fever or depression
- coughing, nasal discharge or breathing difficulties
- staggering, tremors or other nervous signs
- unexplained illness in multiple animals
- sudden or unusual deaths.

If several animals become sick or die unexpectedly, seek veterinary advice and report it immediately.

Carcass management

Landholders will determine the best disposal option depending on their circumstances.

- Carcasses may be left in situ.
- Carcasses may be buried or binned.
- Some landholders may have the capacity to incinerate carcasses, subject to advice from Bushfires NT regarding seasonal conditions and fire bans.

Please refer to nt.gov.au/birdflu or birdflu.gov.au for more information about H5 bird flu and regarding safe disposal methods for carcasses and personal protective equipment.

Maintain an up-to-date [Biosecurity Management Plan](#).



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