

Bird Flu Exposure Prevention

Employer Checklist

Bird flu, also called avian influenza or H5N1, has been detected in dairy cattle and poultry in California. The virus that causes bird flu can pose a risk to workers who come in contact with sick or dead animals or their environment.

To decrease the risk of agricultural workers getting sick from bird flu, employers in California must follow California Code of Regulations, Title 8 section 5199.1 Aerosol Transmissible Diseases – Zoonotic in addition to Title 8 section 3202 Injury and Illness Prevention Program. A disease that is spread by aerosols means that it is a disease transmitted by droplets, particles, or dust in the air. It is believed that agricultural workers can get sick with bird flu by splashes of raw milk entering the eyes, nose, or mouth or by getting dust contaminated with the virus in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

If employees may be exposed to bird flu, review and implement the following action items.



Written procedure

- Does your farm have a written injury and illness prevention program that describes how you will identify and control workplace hazards?
- Does your farm have written zoonotic disease control procedures to limit the risk of transmission of disease from animals to workers?
- Are these procedures up-to-date and available to all workers onsite?



Sanitation

- Are effective sanitation measures in place?
- Is the workplace cleaned and disinfected properly?
- Are dead animals and wastes removed from the work areas and disposed of properly?
- Are handwashing facilities available and stocked with soap and towels?
- Are showers and changing rooms available to employees who work with infected animals or their environment?



Biosecurity

Biosecurity is meant to limit direct or indirect animal-to-animal transmission of disease. It is also intended to limit disease transmission to the surrounding environment and to people who come into contact with animals.

- Do you have control measures to reduce the risk of transmission of bird flu onto or off of your farm?
- How do you protect workers from contracting bird flu virus from sick animals?
- Are all employees who enter areas that may contain the virus supervised by a person knowledgeable in the employer's disease control procedures?



Training

- Have workers been trained about bird flu, symptoms, the employer's zoonotic control procedures, and required personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- Have you trained workers to properly use a respirator and explained the limitations of respirator use?
- Have workers who work with infected animals or who clean areas used by infected animals been trained on the employer's medical services program?
- Is the training in a language and manner that workers can understand?



PPE

- Have workers been provided and trained in how to use required PPE such as respirators, gloves, eye protection, coveralls, etc.?
- Is there a procedure and location to dispose of or launder the PPE after use?



Medical care

- Do you have a plan to provide medical services for your employees who work with infected animals or their environment?
- Are employees medically cleared to use a respirator?
- Do you monitor your workers for symptoms of bird flu?
- Are employees with symptoms referred to medical care for evaluation?
- Are employees encouraged to report illness to a supervisor?
- If an illness is reported, call your local health department to request testing.