



Legislative Overview

Dr. Brian Hoefs | State Veterinarian

The mission of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health is to protect the health of the state's domestic animals through education and cooperation with veterinarians, producers, owners and communities.

Introduction

- Dr. Brian Hoefs
- State Veterinarian and Executive Director
- Appointed August 2023



Board members



Board Members

Erica Sawatzke | Board President, Poultry Producer, Kensington

Peggy Anne Hawkins, DVM | Board Vice President, Veterinarian, Northfield

Jessica Koppien-Fox, DVM | Veterinarian, Marshall

Alex Stade | Cattle Producer, Prior Lake

Steve Neil | Livestock Producer, Northfield

Brandon Schafer | Livestock Producer, Goodhue

Abigail Maynard, DVM | Veterinarian Specializing in Companion Animals, St. Paul Park

Non-emergency priorities

- African Swine Fever
 - Monitoring sightings on our northern border.
- Rabies
 - Continued uptick in cases over past decade.
- Tularemia
 - Record 27 cases last year in cats.
- Kennels
 - Investigating complaints against kennels with limited scope of authority.
- Farmed cervids
 - No CWD detections last year (Aug. 2022) and implemented exclusionary fencing requirements.



Emergency priorities

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
- H5N1 in livestock
- Avian Metapneumovirus

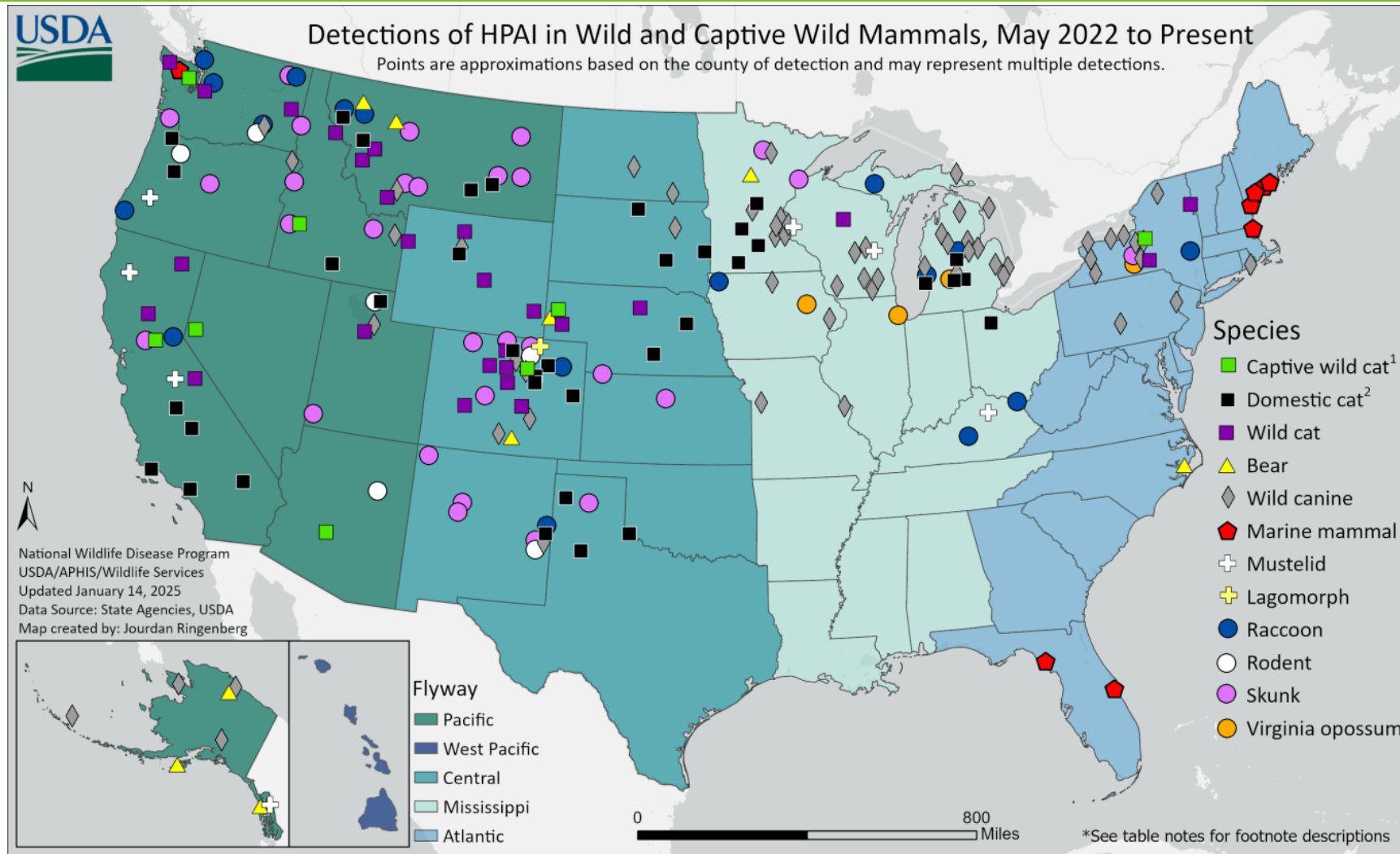


What is H5N1?

- H5N1 is a subtype of the influenza A virus.
- Minnesota outbreak has been active since 2022.
 - Initial concern in 2022 focused on impact to poultry.
 - Detected in other livestock in 2024 and expanded Board's response.
- What's in a name? HPAI vs. H5N1:

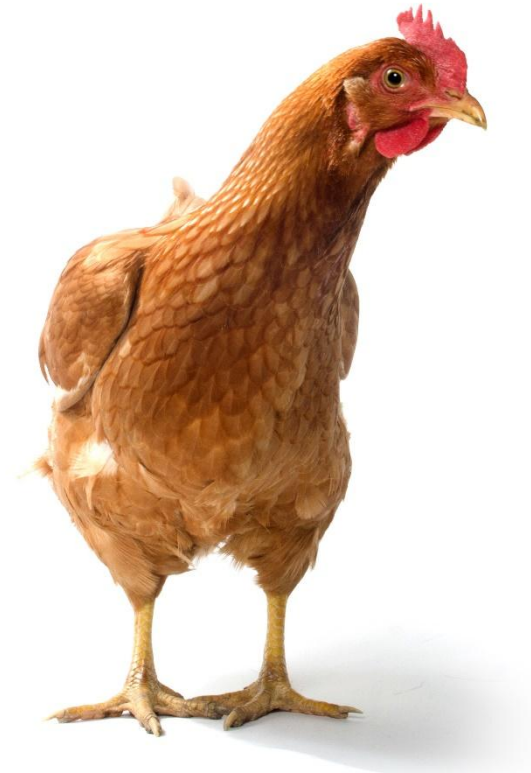


H5N1 in mammals



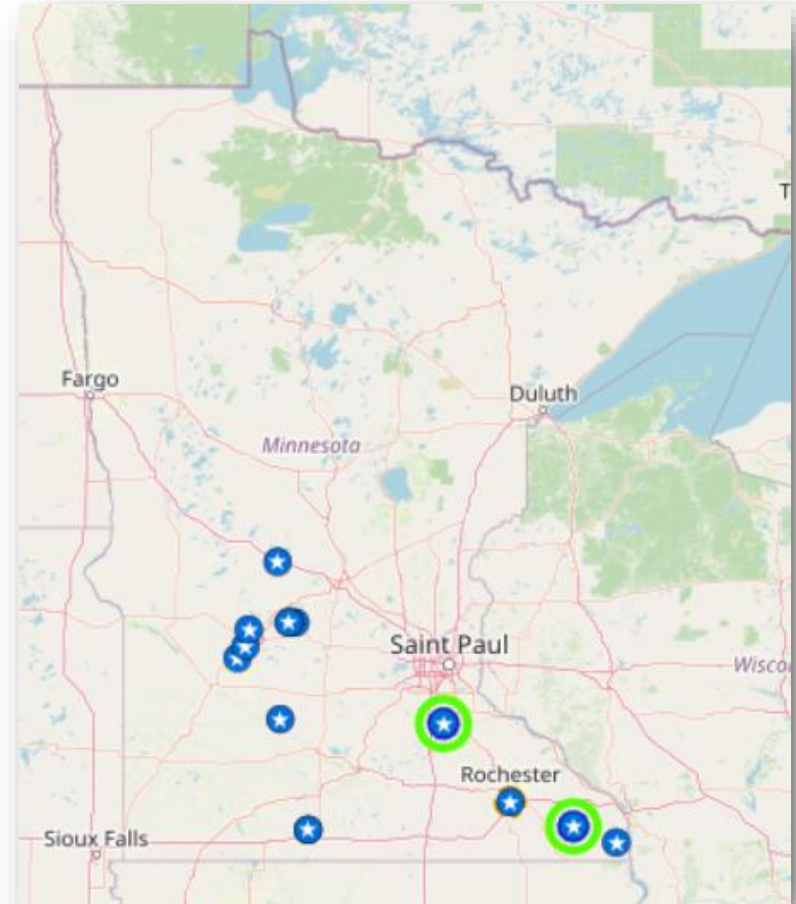
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Most recent detection: January 14, 2025.
- Continued surveillance and suspect testing.
- Preparing for the spring wave.
- Cost to respond: \$600,000+ in 2024 (BAH salary only)
 - \$450,000+ last year.
- This virus is not going away.



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Current picture (Fall 2024 to Winter 2025)
- 11 H5N1 HPAI cases
 - 7 commercial premises
 - 4 backyard premises
- Genomic sequences show current poultry infections tied to wild birds.
 - Transmission routes still being studied.
- D1.1 and A3 subtypes
 - Current infections highlight distinct variants.
 - No spillover among dairy and poultry populations.



H5N1 in livestock

- Most significant in dairy industry.
- Viral spread linked to cattle movements.
- B3.13 strain of H5N1.
 - No evidence of wild bird spread.
- Biosecurity and pre-movement testing key to stop spread.



H5N1 milk surveillance sampling

- Department of Agriculture leading sampling effort in February.
- Board will notify producer of positive.
 - Quarantine premises.
 - Permit milk movement.
 - Allowed to go to pasteurization.
- Potential for overlap of poultry and dairy cases during peak spring migration.



Avian Metapneumovirus (aMPV)

- 871 aMPV positive tests since April 2024.
 - Likely an undercount of actual cases across Minnesota.
- aMPV affects poultry.
 - Causes respiratory infections.
 - Reproductive disorders.
 - Weaken birds' immune systems leaving them more susceptible to other bacterial or viral infections.
- Coinfections lead to significant mortality and production losses.

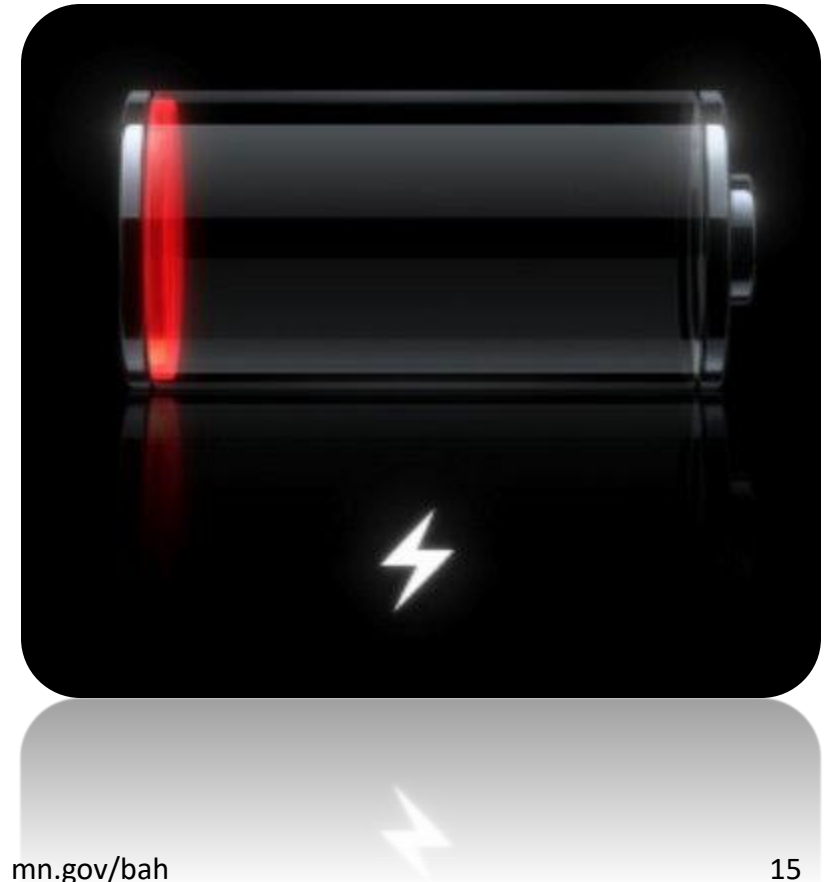


- Continues to circulate in Minnesota.
- aMPV testing stresses laboratories and surveillance efforts because sick flocks often need to be tested for both aMPV and HPAI due to the similar presentation of mortality and clinical signs.
 - There is no official response to aMPV positive flocks.
- European vaccines are approved and in use by Minnesota breeder flocks.
- USDA recently approved importation of live virus, which could be used by commercial flocks in Minnesota.



Response fatigue

- March 25, 2025: three consecutive years responding to HPAI.
- Last year Board staff worked:
 - 8,882 hours on HPAI response.
 - 1,122 overtime HPAI hours.
 - Does not include cattle response or aMPV.
 - In addition to baseline workload.
- Deeply personal for veterinarians dedicated to caring for animals.



Where we go from here

- 20-percent of Board funding comes from federal funds.
 - Federal funding is not guaranteed each fiscal year.
 - Minnesota does have permanent USDA staff in-state
- Diseases not going to recede.
- HPAI alone has strained Board resources.
- Focus on ensuring the Board has the resources and capabilities to maintain services.



Thank You!

Dr. Brian Hoefs

State Veterinarian and Executive Director