

Plan Approval Page

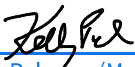
Name of Plan: Utah Zoonotic Influenza Interagency Response Plan

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Approval signatures:

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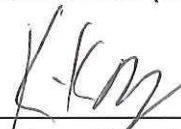
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Utah Zoonotic Influenza Interagency Response Plan

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Purpose

This plan is intended to facilitate coordination between Utah's Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and local health departments (LHDs) in the event of zoonotic influenza in Utah. This plan outlines how these agencies will share information during zoonotic influenza response. In order to enhance response operations for all agencies, specific goals addressed in this plan include:

1. Facilitate timely interagency communication regarding zoonotic influenza.
2. Define agency roles and interactions.
3. Provide consistent public messaging.

Scope

This plan addresses any type of zoonotic influenza, regardless of the affected species (domestic animals, wildlife, or humans). It outlines the coordination between UDAF, DWR, DHHS, and LHDs to appropriately address possible human and animal exposure when responding to zoonotic influenza in Utah. Each agency has distinct roles, responsibilities, and protocols for zoonotic influenza response. This coordination plan does not override any agency's response plan but is intended to complement and align with those plans. Each agency will separately activate and respond according to self-defined thresholds and triggers.

Situation overview

Influenza viruses can infect many species, including humans, wildlife, livestock, and pets. Some strains mostly infect only one species (e.g., for canine influenza: H3N8, H3N2), while others are more readily transmissible between species (e.g., for swine influenza: H1N1, H1N2, H3N2).

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is of particular zoonotic concern. HPAI is an influenza A variant that commonly infects birds and causes high mortality rates when it occurs in poultry and some wildlife species. Different strains of the virus have appeared in different combinations of species over the years, some of which have been able to infect humans. Resulting illness severity can range from asymptomatic or mild to more serious forms that may result in death.

Beginning in 2022, the HPAI H5N1 virus has caused outbreaks in wildlife, poultry, dairy cattle, and other animal species in Utah, elsewhere in the United States, and worldwide. As of February 2025, numerous human infections in the United States have also been reported, most of which have been mild. These reported human infections have been primarily in people who had prolonged and consistent exposures to infected animals. Since April 2022, Utah has experienced massive agricultural and wild animal losses due to this strain of the virus. Although

this plan was developed specifically to address the HPAI strain that emerged in 2022, it is intended to be adaptable to any zoonotic influenza.

A One Health approach is the best way to address concerns that cross the boundaries of animal, human, and environmental health. Based upon Utah's strong One Health network, relevant agencies in Utah have worked together to address the potential for human infections with zoonotic influenza. The intent of this plan is to clarify and document interagency, collaborative protocols to ensure future response is consistent and streamlined.

Planning assumptions

- Important impacts of zoonotic influenza infection to consider include economics, way of life, ecology, and the risk of human infection.
- Zoonotic influenza in one species of animal may transmit to another, including humans.
- Preventive measures can help reduce the risk of zoonotic influenza transmission between species, including humans.
- Normally, LHDs and DHHS would be directly involved early in many situations that could impact human health. However, livestock environments have additional considerations, including:
 - Zoonotic pathogens are ubiquitous in livestock environments, yet this seldom triggers LHD or DHHS response.
 - Farm workers may under-report illness or symptoms due to a variety of factors, including:
 - language barriers;
 - fear of lost work;
 - hesitation to interact with government officials; or
 - unfamiliarity with official systems.
 - UDAF relies on livestock and poultry producers to voluntarily report suspected livestock and poultry disease infections; hence, response efforts by all parties must be carefully undertaken so as not to violate the producers' trust with UDAF.

Independent responsibilities of agencies regarding zoonotic influenza

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF)

UDAF is responsible for domestic animal influenza surveillance, case management, and response in Utah. Specific activities include:

- Crafting domestic animal surveillance programs.
- Reviewing and approving biosecurity plans for commercial poultry and gamebird premises.

- Responding to suspected cases and facilitating diagnosis in collaboration with the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (UVDL), USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, and other diagnostic specialists.
- Instituting quarantines and enhanced biosecurity protocols on affected and control area premises.
- Notifying other agencies, including DWR, UVDL, and DHHS, of domestic animal cases.
- Planning, overseeing, and/or participating in depopulation, disposal, and decontamination on affected premises.
- Distributing educational materials (developed by DHHS and LHDs) to humans exposed to infected domestic animals.
- Completing indemnity paperwork in order for livestock producers to receive reimbursement.
- Determining when premises can be released from quarantine or allowed to restock.

Utah Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources (DWR)

DWR is responsible for wildlife influenza surveillance, case management, and response in Utah. Specific activities include:

- Conducting surveillance for any suspicious mortalities in waterfowl, raptors, or other influenza susceptible mammals.
- Coordinating with other agencies, including DHHS, UDAF, UVDL, the Utah Public Health Laboratory (UPHL), and LHDs, in notification of wildlife cases, locations, and people exposed to infected animals.
- Developing and distributing information and biosecurity plans for zoonotic influenza to internal staff biologists, wildlife rehabilitators, researchers, hunters, zoos/wild animal facilities, and the public who may interact with infected wildlife.
- Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and guidance for use for internal staff biologists who participate in surveillance.
- Providing educational materials (developed by DHHS and LHDs) to humans exposed to infected wildlife.
- Reporting to DHHS if human cases are identified.
- Regulating the extent of captures and research conducted on susceptible species during an outbreak.
- Conduct continued epidemiological surveillance on dead and live birds in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for increased sampling efforts.

Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and local health departments (LHDs)

DHHS and LHDs are responsible for human influenza surveillance, case management, response, and prevention. Specific activities include:

- Coordinating with local, tribal, regional, state, and federal agencies and other organizations to respond to zoonotic influenza.

- Developing and providing information and guidance for the medical community, responders, general public, high-risk populations, UDAF, and DWR.
- Working with partners to put disease containment measures in place.
- Working with healthcare providers and the DHHS Office of the Medical Examiner, as needed, to investigate cases of influenza-associated hospitalizations, influenza-associated pediatric deaths, and novel influenza.
- Letting the public know about statewide human influenza trends and any outbreaks or unusual developments.
- Educating the public on up-to-date best practices to stay protected from influenza.
- Conducting epidemiological surveillance and investigation of human infection based on LHD discretion (passive vs. active surveillance).
- Maintaining a robust surveillance system to detect influenza trends and any outbreaks or unusual developments, including syndromic and wastewater surveillance.
- Facilitating respirator fit testing for responders, if needed and as appropriate.
- Offering personal protective equipment (PPE) to people potentially exposed to zoonotic influenza (those exposed to infected animals).
 - The LHD or DHHS may provide PPE if requested by affected premises or other relevant entities (see [Appendix](#) for more information about PPE supplies).
- Coordinating with healthcare providers and UPHL to make influenza testing easier.
- Facilitating influenza testing for people who develop symptoms of illness after exposure to zoonotic influenza via one or more of the following methods:
 - Advising the exposed person to visit a healthcare provider for testing at the expense of the patient.
 - Advising the exposed person to visit their LHD for testing at the expense of the public health system (the specimen will be submitted to UPHL for analysis and the submitter will be informed of the result).
 - In the case of employee exposure on a farm, collaborate with farm management to arrange for a healthcare provider to test the exposed employee at the farm's expense (the farm and LHD will be informed of the result with a signed release of information).
- If there is evidence of human-to-human transmission, DHHS may consider increasing the amount of influenza A samples it subtypes.

Interagency information sharing

Agencies will share information with other agencies according to established points of contact and information-sharing agreements (see [Appendix](#)).

1. Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

When UDAF is notified of a case of zoonotic influenza in a domestic animal:

- UDAF will distribute educational materials provided by DHHS or LHDs to exposed humans.

- UDAF will notify DWR and will provide viral strain, affected species, timeframe of diagnosis, county, and city, but will not provide additional premise details.
- UDAF will provide information about cases of zoonotic influenza in domestic animals with DHHS per the following protocol (A–C). DHHS will, in turn, share this information with affected LHDs.
 - A. If there is **no confirmed symptomatic human illness in Utah** among exposed people and **no evidence of zoonosis** in the United States: UDAF will notify DHHS and will provide viral strain, affected species, timeframe of diagnosis, county, and city, if known.
 - B. If there is **confirmed symptomatic zoonotic influenza infection in Utah among exposed people**: UDAF will notify DHHS and will provide viral strain, affected species, timeframe of diagnosis, and premise contact information (premise name, premise address, and phone number of the owner or manager of the affected premise), if known.
 - C. If there is **no confirmed symptomatic zoonotic influenza infection in Utah** among exposed people, but there have been **confirmed cases of symptomatic zoonotic influenza infection elsewhere** in the United States: a group of UDAF, DHHS, and LHD representatives will meet to vote on an action plan (see action plan meeting guidelines below).

Action plan meeting guidelines

Meeting context: A group of UDAF, DHHS, and LHD representatives will meet to determine which UDAF premise information sharing protocol will be enacted (A or B) if there is no confirmed, symptomatic zoonotic influenza infection in Utah among exposed people, but there have been confirmed cases of symptomatic zoonotic influenza infection elsewhere in the United States.

The UDAF State Veterinarian (or designee) or the DHHS State Public Health Veterinarian (or designee) will be responsible for setting the meeting, inviting participants, and facilitating the meeting.

5 voting participants (or designees):

- 1) UDAF State Veterinarian
- 2) UDAF Commissioner
- 3) LHD representative
 - a) There will be a single vote representing LHDs even if there are multiple affected LHDs.
 - b) The LHD voting representative will be designated by the Local Health Officer(s) of the affected LHD(s).
 - c) Even though there will be only one LHD representative vote, other LHD personnel may attend this meeting.
- 4) DHHS representative (State Epidemiologist or State Public Health Veterinarian)

- 5) Subject matter expert from UVDL or Utah State University Extension or College of Veterinary Medicine

In addition to the voting participants, other relevant people may attend at the invitation of voting participants, though the total number of meeting participants may not exceed 10.

Agenda:

- Review the meeting context statement above.
- Situation report:
 - UDAF (≤5-minute briefing)
 - LHD or DHHS (≤5-minute briefing)
- Vote on whether to follow protocol A or B.
- DHHS will send an email to the voting participants with the results of the voting.

This decision will apply until the quarantine of all premises has been released.

2. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

When DWR is notified of a case of zoonotic influenza in wildlife:

- DWR will distribute educational materials provided by DHHS or LHDs to exposed humans.
- DWR will notify DHHS and will provide viral strain, affected species, timeframe of diagnosis, specific location, and contact information for exposed people, if known.
- DWR will notify UDAF and will provide viral strain, affected species, timeframe of diagnosis, specific location, and contact information for owners of exposed domestic animals, if known.

3. Utah Department of Health and Human Services

When DHHS is notified of potentially zoonotic, non-seasonal influenza in a human:

- DHHS will notify UDAF and DWR and will provide viral strain, timeframe of diagnosis, symptoms, county of residence, and, if known, information regarding animal exposure.
 - If the human patient had **known exposure to livestock or birds**, DHHS will notify UDAF of the name(s) and location(s) of relevant animal operation(s) at which the exposure occurred.
 - If the human patient had **known exposure to wildlife**, DHHS will notify DWR of the animal species and location(s) at which the exposure occurred.

Joint response

As appropriate, agencies may elect to jointly conduct specific disease response activities.

Examples of joint activities may include:

- Visits to affected farms to address items concerning both animal health (animal testing, depopulation, quarantine) and human health (PPE, symptom watch, testing).

- Wildlife surveillance surrounding an infected farm.
- Fit testing, disease testing, or symptom monitoring of state responders.
- Outreach to animal owners and the general public.

Public communication

Each agency will communicate with the public according to established protocols and its area of expertise. Partner agencies will refer inquiries to the appropriate agency and will refer to each other's relevant educational materials and websites in public communications, as appropriate. The agencies listed in this plan will coordinate with each other regarding public communication as needed. Public education materials are available (see [Appendix](#)).

Plan training and maintenance

Each agency is responsible for training its personnel and relevant partners regarding the execution of this plan.

A workgroup composed of representatives from the signatory agencies will review this plan at least once every three years or when needed process improvements are identified through real-life activations or exercises.

Authorities and references

- Utah Code: Title 23A, Wildlife Resources Act
https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title23A/23A.html?v=C23A_2023050320230701
- Utah Code: Title 4, Utah Agricultural Code <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title4/4.html>
- Utah Code: Title 26A, Local Health Authorities
https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title26A/26A.html?v=C26A_1800010118000101
- Utah Code: Title 26B, Utah Health and Human Services Code
https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title26B/26B.html?v=C26B_2022050420220701
- Utah Rule: Communicable Disease Rule, R386-702
<https://adminrules.utah.gov/public/rule/R386-702/Current%20Rules>
- [Appendix](#): Contact list, educational materials, and information-sharing agreements