MINNESOTA
BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

Meeting Minutes: September Board Meeting

Date: 9/10/2025
Location: FarmAmerica, 7367 360th Ave., Waseca, MN 56093, and teleconference on Microsoft Teams.

Attendance

Board Members

- Erica Sawatzke, President
- Peggy Anne Hawkins, DVM, Vice President
- Jessica Koppien-Fox, DVM
- Steve Neil
- Alex Stade
- Brandon Schafer
- Abigail Maynard, DVM

Consultants to the Board

- Michelle Medina, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Mary Wood, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Stacy Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health
- Laura Molgaard, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
- Hemant Naikare, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Guests

- Stephan Schaefbauer, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services
- A.J. Campbell, Emory University
- Scott Wells, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine

Staff

- Brian Hoefs
- Steven Kivisto
- Dan Callahan
- Shauna Voss
- Heather Damico
- Melissa Smith
- Myah Walker
- Erik Jopp
- Erin Crider
- Michael Crusan
- Addie Evans Engelke

Call to Order

Ms. Erica Sawatzke called the meeting to order. Following introductions, Ms. Sawatzke asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the April quarterly meeting. Mr. Steve Neil made a motion. Dr. Peggy Anne Hawkins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Sawatzke asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Brandon Schafer moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Alex Stade seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Board of Animal Health Update

Dr. Brian Hoefs, State Veterinarian and Executive Director of the Board of Animal Health, gave an update on actions of Board staff since the last meeting.

Minnesota was declared free of HPAI in poultry on Aug. 28, 2025. Since then, South Dakota and North Dakota have reported four and two cases, respectively. The Board understands the declaration of freedom from HPAI in poultry might be short-lived. With cases emerging in states around the country, it is likely that Minnesota will again see HPAI return.

After four months free of detections of H5N1 in dairy cattle, Minnesota was elevated to Category 4 of the USDA elimination plan on Aug. 22, 2025. Unless another detection occurs, the milk testing strategy will be altered to reduce the frequency of testing of individual premises. Federal movement orders and response actions will remain unchanged. Nationally, cases are still appearing sporadically, with strains of the virus appearing in cattle that have not been the common strains previously. The Board has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to conduct the milk testing program. The change in status allows for testing milk from Minnesota dairy farms every other month, rather than monthly. The new testing schedule will be implemented in October.

The northward spread of New World Screwworm (NWS) is receiving a lot of attention from the media as well as from state veterinarians and agriculture departments across the country. The closest detection to the United Staes is still 370 miles south of the Mexico/Texas border. No further northward movement has been detected since July. Unchecked cattle movements, cattle smuggling, and ignoring international import laws have led to the insects spreading despite efforts at mitigation. USDA is working on sterile fly production facilities in both the U.S. and Mexico and in South America as part of their larger prevention program. A human case of NWS was reported in Maryland. The patient was a recent traveler in El Salvador. The concern for Minnesota continues to be the possibility of travelers and pets inadvertently bringing the flies to the state.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved off-label use of medication that could be effective in prevention and control of NWS. A National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO) working group is developing guidelines for interstate movement requirements and surveillance zones if a case is detected in the US.

On the companion animal front, cases of tularemia are still appearing in cats and dogs in the state. The Companion Animal Program has documented 32 positive cases of rabies in domestic animals and participated, with the Minnesota Department of Health, in 93 investigations of possible rabies cases. A case of canine brucellosis was detected in a rescue group that brought dogs to Minnesota from South Dakota. The dog showed signs, and a veterinary examination confirmed brucellosis. Other animals from the same litter also tested

positive. The cases are all coming from the same area in South Dakota. The Board is working with local groups and government on possible restrictions on animal movement and education messaging to help curb the spread.

Dr. Heather Damico was able to secure a cooperative agreement for funding genetics research in cervidae (specifically elk). Eighteen cervidae producers have signed up 922 animals for the research project. The Minnesota Elk Breeders Association assisted with securing the project funding.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a vaccine-preventable disease that is widespread in horses. In the past year, there have been 11 reported cases with 5 equine deaths. Horses would typically recover if properly vaccinated, and most of the cases were unvaccinated or under vaccinated animals. The Board works closely with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) on WNV because the disease is carried by mosquitoes, which bring a risk to human health as well. There is no human vaccine, but prevention methods like using bug spray and eliminating mosquito breeding sites like stagnant water near barns and homes can help keep people and animals from being bitten.

There are a few county fairs remaining in the season. The Minnesota State Fair was a success, though the Board received numerous comments and questions from the public regarding the licensing of the Miracle of Birth Center.

Dr. Jessica Fox asked how old dogs need to be to do brucellosis testing. Dr. Steve Kivisto said 6 months.

Dr. Fox asked which drug was being considered for off-label treatment and prevention of NWS. Hoefs said it's Ivermectin used off label.

Dr. Fox asked if the cervidae research project is related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Dr. Hoefs confirmed that CWD would be a part of the study.

Dr. Fox asked where someone could find more information about the requirements for exhibitions for producers. Dr. Cornille said it's on our website.

Dr. Hawkins asked if the Board's YouTube channel has the flexibility to host information on any program. Mr. Dan Callahan said it does.

Ms. Sawatzke noted that NWS is a unique situation because it is a pest and not a disease. Dr. Hoefs said it's an important distinction even in how we refer to the infestation (not infection)

College of Veterinary Medicine Update

Dr. Laura Molgaard gave an update on the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine.

Students are back in class for the year. The incoming class had more than 2,000 applications for few seats. The college is currently undergoing a curriculum revitalization project which is projected to be complete in the fall of 2027.

Noteworthy is the Spectrum of Care Clinic initiative. The clinic is designed to tailor treatments to the needs of the animal in a holistic approach that is community focused by removing or reducing barriers to care. A grant has been secured that will allow for renovations and opening of the clinic to the public.

Due to legislative decisions, the veterinary loan forgiveness program – designed to help reduce the student loan burden on veterinarians practicing in rural areas – faced some changes. Funding was reduced for the program, and it will be renamed to focus on large animal veterinary care.

The U.S. Department of Education has put new rules in place to change the way classes can be conducted with students. Primarily this means that some classes that were offered remotely will be done in-person instead.

The university's strategic plan continues to move forward, with more details to appear in the fall. Any alumni who received a survey invitation are asked to fill it out and emphasize the importance of investment in the Saint Paul campus of the university as well as One Health programming.

In personnel news, the Veterinary Medical Center has named a new director, Dr. Rosalind Chow. The center will be accredited once again in the spring. Recruitment has been successful in bringing in new faculty to the college.

The university has put in place operating budget cuts and reallocations of nearly 7%. This is particularly challenging for the veterinary program as it already runs lean. Federal funding has been problematic as well. Around 18% of the university's operating budget comes from federal funding. Luckily, philanthropy and commitments to future funding have been successful with bringing in larger amounts to help bridge funding gaps.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Update

Dr. Hemant Naikare, Director of the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL), gave an update on the lab's work.

The VDL staffing will undergo changes soon, as retirements are projected in a few long-held positions, particularly those of Dr. Stephanie Rossow and Dr. Connie Gebhart. With these retirements, there are also new additions to the staff, including Dr. Talita Resende as food animal pathologist, Dr. Varvara Semenova as poultry pathologist, Dr Carlos Lopez Figueroa as board certified veterinary pathologist. Bringing on the new staff members means the lab can spend less time focusing on recruitment and hiring and move on to focusing more on innovation and improvement. Dr. Naikare thanked the Board for their support during the time when staffing levels were not complete.

Certifications from both American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) and National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) are classed as in Good Standing at both the main Saint Paul laboratory and the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) in Willmar.

The VDL has seen a 9% increase in testing in the first two months of FY2026. A review is currently underway of fees charged by the lab for testing services. Tentatively, increases could be as much as 4% over current costs on select tests. The increases are slated for Aug. 15, 2026.

In legislative news, the United States Senate approved a $1M funding increase for the VDL. These dollars will be used for capacity building, specifically augmenting the electronic lab management systems. The bill has passed the Senate and is waiting for House approval before moving forward. Estimates place the funding to arrive possibly by fall 2025, provided the bill is passed.

The lab has new tests available, and others soon to be available, to serve a variety of testing needs in ruminants and other species. Specifically, testing is becoming available for swine for use by biomedical device companies.

Dr. Hawkins commented that it's good to see the pathology department so well staffed as it has been a long time since the staffing levels were comparable.

Legislative Update

Ms. Michelle Medina, Legislative Liaison for the Board and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), gave an update on the work of the Minnesota Legislature.

The next legislative session will be policy focused, but there will likely be a budget discussion as well. It's unclear at this time what those discussions around the budget will be but will probably concern more belt tightening because the state is in a deficit. The next regular session will open Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026, and end Monday, May 18, 2026.

A special session has been proposed by Gov. Tim Walz to talk about gun safety. This special session will likely have no impact on our work. The governor calls special session, but the legislature closes it.

The Board and MDA are preparing for the next regular session. MDA has a public portal to solicit ideas from the public on policy changes. The portal is MDA focused, but there have been some suggestions made by the public that relate to the work of the Board. Ms. Medina noted that if there are any Board policies that need to be updated via legislation, staff will work to be ready to move when the session opens.

USDA Update

Dr. Stephan Schaefbauer, USDA Area Veterinarian in Charge of Minnesota, gave an update on the actions of the USDA.

Early in 2025, USDA Secretary Rollins released a five-prong plan to combat HPAI, including nearly $1B in funding. Around $500M is designated for strengthening biosecurity in poultry operations, including expanded wildlife assessments and deployment of 20 epidemiologists. The plan also expands biosecurity assessments offered by the USDA to producers with unaffected farms to preempt the virus appearing on those premises.

In July 2025, a reorganization plan for USDA was announced to restructure the agency. The goals are to streamline the USDA, reduce costs and strengthen field presence. Around 2,600 staff will be relocated from the Washington, D.C., area to five regional hubs across the U.S. in Fort Collins, CO, Indianapolis, IN, Salt Lake City, UT, Raleigh NC, and Kansas City, MO. Around 2,000 staff will remain posted in Washington, D.C.

Four pillars of the reorganization plan:

- Align workforce size with available resources
- Bring USDA closer to constituents
- Eliminate redundant bureaucracy
- Consolidate overlapping support functions

A public comment period about the reorganization is open until Sept. 30, 2025. USDA is seeking feedback on hub placement and continuity impacts on service delivery. The feedback will inform the final implementation.

National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP) has a three-step process in place for the near future:

- Executing FY2025 cooperative agreements
- Closing out completed projects
- Preparing to launch FY2026 funding opportunities

Congress increased funding for NADPRP to $70M per year for FY2026. This results in expanded opportunities for collaborative projects between USDA and state/local agencies with the state goal of strengthening local, regional and national capabilities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to animal disease outbreaks. Minnesota is second only to Iowa in the number of NADPRP projects that happen in-state through various agencies, including the Board. Listening sessions for NADPRP grants are planned for late September or October for stakeholders to participate, share ideas, and shape future program directions. More details will be announced.

New World Screwworm (NWS) continues to be a concern for animal health in Central America and Mexico. While it has not yet come to the U.S., historic economic losses in Texas in the 1970s can be extrapolated to the current day. The impact would be losses in the billions of dollars. Since the 1980's, the United States, Mexico and Panama partnered to steadily move the elimination line of NWS further south using a combination of sterile fly seeding, regulatory controls, field surveillance and stakeholder engagement.

NWS maggots only feed on living tissue of warm-blooded animals. USDA will be funding renovation of a sterile fly facility in Mexico and building a new facility in Texas to produce more sterile flies to reduce offspring. Live cattle, horse and bison imports through the southern border have been restricted. Dogs can be imported but require a health certificate and to be inspected within 5 days.

Rural Veterinary Action Plan works to combat the critical shortage of food animal veterinarians in rural areas. A safe and secure food supply relies on veterinary care for food animals produced across the country. The formal action plan was launched August 2025.

Key actions

- Expand and streamline loan repayment and grant programs (VMLRP, VSGP)
- Improve data gathering on workforce shortages (ERS study due 2026)
- Recruitment and retention incentives: Pay adjustments, tuition support, bonuses.
- Catalog federal resources to help vets start and sustain practices.
- Stakeholder engagement through listening sessions (Fall 2025)

In support of this effort, $15 million in new funding has been allocated for loan repayment programs. USDA is considering recruitment and retention incentives for veterinarians.

Locally, the APHIS-VS in Minnesota lost two veterinarians to buy-outs offered by USDA. This leaves five positions vacant; four veterinary medical officers and one animal health technician.

The field office in Minnesota has completed its move from South Saint Paul to Minneapolis. Contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses will remain the same for locally based USDA staff.

Mr. Schafer asked whether any of the increased NADPRP funding had been allocated for specific disease response and whether the Board should examine where additional funding would help in Minnesota. Dr. Schaefbauer said the grants are not commodity specific, they are simply allocated for emergency disease response. Opportunities exist for Minnesota in areas of swine, poultry and perhaps even cervids.

Dr. Fox asked what the rationale was for moving the field office from South Saint Paul to Minneapolis. Dr. Schaefbauer said that USDA field offices are typically located closer to partner agencies USDA works with, so this move is a change from past practice.

Mr. Neil asked if Mexico is doing work to eradicate NWS. Dr. Schaefbauer said before eradication, Mexico partnered with the U.S. That partnership continues, but the exact dollar amount Mexico is contributing to the effort is unclear at this point.

Department of Health Update

Dr. Stacy Holzbauer, state public health veterinarian, gave an update on the work of MDH related to zoonotic disease.

On Aug. 26, 2025, CDC/USDA/Maryland Department of Health announced a confirmed human case of New World Screwworm (NWS). The patient had traveled to El Salvador before returning to Maryland. The risk to the public is considered very low. Human cases of NWS associated with travel is not a completely new situation as cases have been found in 2014 (Dominican Republic), 2023 (Argentina and Brazil), and 2024 (Dominican Republic).

Risk factors for human cases of NWS:

- Open wounds
- Foul smelling wounds
- Infected wounds
- Hyperkeratosis (thickening of the outer layer of skin)
- Compromised immune systems
- Sleeping outdoors
- Working around infected livestock

Clinical manifestations of NWS

- Pain
- Sensation of movement under the skin
- Extensive tissue invasion and destruction
- Larvae can be seen in or around open sores

Secondary infections may cause fever, chills, and could result in death. Death is more common when larvae are present in the head.

When a doctor suspects a NWS, they inform MDH. MDH investigates, then notifies the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Board to ensure all larvae are accounted for and properly disposed of.

CDC then notifies USDA to share investigation results and plan next steps including communication plans and surveillance.

This year has been a banner year for West Nile Virus (WNV) cases. As of September, there have been 40 confirmed cases in humans, resulting in four deaths. Thirty positive blood donors have been found by testing. The median number of annual cases is 35. Reports are still coming in, with nearly 60 reports pending final investigation and testing. Outbreaks have hit Minnesota in 2003, 2007, 2012, 2016, 2018, and 2023.

Nationally, there have been 771 cases to date. North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado and Arizona are reporting high case counts for the year so far. In outbreak years, we typically see higher case counts in western states due to the kinds of mosquitoes who transmit the disease being more common in those areas.

Tularemia cases are also in the record numbers in human and animal cases. Late summer/early fall is when the disease typically peaks in Minnesota and begins to decline in November. Most cases are skin infections, but some pulmonary cases – typically severe – have appeared as well.

Board Budget Update

Ms. Melissa Smith, Business Manager at the Board, gave an update on the Board's budget.

As of July 1, 2025, Fiscal Year 2026 began the new budget biennium. The Board secured an operating adjustment of a $265,000 increase in FY2026 and $390,000 for FY2027.

FY26 Total Budget

- General Appropriation Budget: $6,675,000
    - Payroll (73%)
    - Professional Tech Services (testing) (9%)
    - Information Technology (MN.IT) (11%)
    - Space Rental Maintenance and Utilities (3%)
    - Travel & Fleet (2%)
    - Other Expenses (2%)
- Federal Cooperative Agreements: $1,566,233.20
    - Umbrella
    - Traceability
    - US SHIP (Swine Health Improvement Plan)
    - HPAI Emergency Response for Poultry (ends 10/22/25)
    - H5N1 in Livestock (extended for another year)
    - Two Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Agreements (one is largely indemnity, and one is largely research)
- Restricted Special Revenue: $64,000
- **Total: $8,305,233.20**

The Board continues to face challenges regarding funding in the future. Federal funding is uncertain and requires continual monitoring and communicating. Some expenses like salary, MNIT rates and disease testing

rates are going up. The Board will continue to prepare and plan for the FY2028-2029 biennium as the state is projecting a deficit as well.

In other news, the assistant director position, made vacant by Dr. Courtney Wheeler's departure from the Board, was posted and closed on Sept. 4, 2025. A list of candidates has been collated, and interviews will be scheduled soon.

Department of Natural Resources Update

Dr. Mary Wood, State Wildlife Veterinarian at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, gave an update on the work of the DNR regarding wildlife and disease in the state of Minnesota.

To date, DNR has recorded 374 cases of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in wild deer in the state since 2016. There has been a marked increase in disease cases in the past two years despite efforts to manage the disease as it appears. The DNR has a plan in place to monitor CWD infections and augment management efforts as the prevalence of CWD increases in certain areas of the state. These efforts could include increased hunting, culling of animals in the control areas, and increased sampling for the disease.

Currently certain areas of the state require mandatory testing of harvested wild deer taken Nov. 8 and Nov. 9, 2025, which is the opening weekend for deer season for those hunting with firearms. Voluntary testing outside of that window will be offered, and the remainder of the state is designated voluntary for testing for all hunting seasons. Movement restrictions for whole carcasses will also be in place for areas where the disease is known to exist in wild deer. Whole carcasses cannot leave the management zone until a non-positive test is reported.

This year, DNR embarked on a wild turkey health pilot project. Current knowledge is limited on wild turkey health. Southeastern states report population declines with unknown causes. There have been recent detections of avian pox and lymphoproliferative disease virus in Minnesota wild turkeys. The goal is to determine apparent prevalence and spatial distribution of selected pathogens in hunter-harvested turkeys in central Minnesota during the Spring 2025 season. DNR asked hunters for the head with a few inches of neck and part of one of the leg bones of harvested birds for testing. Around 320 testing sample kits were distributed. Preliminary results show some diseases detected, particularly mycoplasma synoviae in 12/64 pooled samples. What this means is not clear yet, but more information will be collected. HPAI and LPAI were not detected. Avian Metapneumovirus was also not detected.

DNR partnered with MDH and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on a pilot project studying the incidence of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Minnesota Wildlife. The pilot study was done in 2021-2023. PFOS, a specific kind of PFAS, was found in every animal tested. White-tailed deer sampling found PFOS levels in similar to the levels reported in deer in Wisconsin, where consumption advisories have been issued in response. Mallard ducks and Canada geese were also sampled and found to have higher levels of PFOS in areas close to PFAS-contaminated sites.

A research project on moose in the state is underway in partnership with the University of Minnesota Duluth and the 1854 Treaty Authority. The project seeks to capture juvenile moose during their first winter and collect data to improve moose population modeling. Specifically, the project is looking at survival rates, mortality and age at first reproduction for young moose in northeastern Minnesota. This information will identify habitat and wildlife management strategies that will benefit moose in the future.

Dr. Hawkins asked if bordering states are doing work to combat and track CWD like Minnesota. Dr. Wood said every state is different in their approach and capacity, so there is a lot of variability about how states do sampling. Many cases are popping up along the North Dakota border, but it's unknown how much sampling and surveillance North Dakota is doing in those areas.

Dr. Hawkins asked if raccoon distemper is tracked by DNR. Dr. Wood said sampling projects are in the planning phases. The DNR is concerned with raccoon rabies too, so those things will likely work hand in hand. Dr. Wood noted that getting samples collected can be difficult for testing, but DNR is looking at reports of behavior.

Ms. Sawatzke thanked Dr. Wood for giving an update and asked if special hunts are done parts of the state to manage deer populations to track and combat the spread of CWD. Dr. Wood noted that a late season December hunt is a tool that can be used to manage populations as well as increasing harvest and targeted culling.

Ms. Sawatzke asked if there are any waterfowl or species that the DNR is planning to test for aMPV in addition to the turkey health project. Dr. Wood said there aren't any plans at this point, but it is an opportunity to expand the program.

Dr. Fox asked if the PFAS testing has included fish or beaver. Dr. Wood said the aquatic folks are doing work in this area.

Poultry Program Update

Dr. Shauna Voss gave an update on the state of poultry diseases in Minnesota, including HPAI and Avian Metapneumovirus (aMPV).

On Aug. 21, 2025, the last quarantine was closed for the 2022-2025 HPAI event in Minnesota. Fifty counties were involved with nearly 9.1 million birds depopulated during the event. The H5N1 HPAI event in Minnesota is closed and resolved. As of Sept. 9, 2025, nationally, there have been four commercial flocks and three backyard flocks that have been confirmed positive. There have been cases in the Dakotas that typically foreshadow cases appearing in Minnesota.

aMPV continues to circulate in Minnesota. Most turkey flocks are currently being vaccinated at the hatchery or on the farm. While turkeys continue to get sick, the significant impacts of the disease are down. There are numerous modified live vaccines and inactivated (killed) vaccines available for use, and learning which ones are most effective is an ongoing process. Testing is continuing in flocks with high mortality to rule out HPAI.

National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) convenes the Official State Agency Meeting every two years. Minneapolis hosted the latest meeting July 15-16, 2025. The General Conference Committee (GCC) charter expired on May 11, 2025, but was renewed and signed by USDA on May 30, 2025. This allowed the GCC to be an official federal advisory committee. Proposed changes from past biennial conferences (2022, 2024) are still under the review process. The changes from 2022 are nearing the final stages.

Major topics of discussion during the NPIP meeting:

- Many states are reporting an increase in detections of Mycoplasma. The cause is not known, but factors like aMPV could be contributing. They are working toward controlling and eradicating versus living with infections.

- Discussion on state import requirements, movement certificates, and how states utilize funding opportunities.
- Avian Influenza updates.

H5N1 in Dairy Research Results

Dr. A.J. Campbell of Emory University gave a presentation on the investigation of H5N1 transmission routes on dairy farms in California.

HPAI H5N1 was confirmed in Texas and Kansas dairy herds on March 25, 2025. Herd-to-herd transmission across the U.S. is facilitated by the movement of infected cattle. Infected cows have abnormal milk with high viral loads. How the virus is transmitted from cow to cow was the focus of the investigation and is ongoing.

The milk parlor is a potential hub for transmission on a dairy:

- Exposure to milk and milk-based aerosols with little PPE
- Disposal of contaminated milk into wastewater stream.
- Cows are in close quarters in parlor.
- Generation of large droplets and milk-based aerosols throughout the milking process.
- Milking equipment.

The project took samples on 14 dairies in four counties in California. Seven dairies with active infections and seven dairies that had H5N1 infections in the past with the status unknown at the time of sampling.

Types of sampling:

- Surface sampling
- Air sampling
- Wastewater sampling
- Longitudinal study investigating H5 in individual quarters over time.

Surface samples were taken from both the liner and the shells of milking equipment. The surfaces revealed to be contaminated after being used for milking cows.

Air samples were used to attempt detection of H5N1 in captured aerosols using three different kinds of samplers. Successful air sampling can be very challenging: Dilution of targeted aerosols, matrix used for collection, size range of aerosols captured by sampler, and flow rate of air sampler are all factors that need to be taken into consideration for proper sampling. The results, however, concluded there is virus in milking parlor air.

Wastewater sampling showed that on-dairy wastewater may pose a threat for peridomestic wildlife. Wastewater was observed to be open to the environment at various points. Manure lagoons have neutral pH that won't inactivate the virus on contact. Samples were taken at milk line clean out, at the sump pump, and at the manure lagoon or pasture. H5N1 was detected in wastewater on 4 of 9 sampled dairies. Low pH solutions, Such as a 3% solution of vinegar, could be used to inactivate affected milk prior to the waste stream.

The results of the sampling showed the virus could be in many locations on affected farms and focusing on risk mitigation strategies in the milking parlor could be an effective way to reduce transmission. Dr. Campbell noted

that there could be multiple modes of transmission in play, and each mode could be inefficient. However, with enough opportunities to spread, transmission can take place.

Ms. Sawatzke asked if the project is ongoing and if data is still being collected. Dr. Campbell said that the lack of active infections means the surveillance portion is completed. The project is continuing with samples of milk and blood to look for antibodies to try to determine how long immunity to the virus might last including by viral strain.

H5 Related Research Projects

Dr. Scott Wells, a professor of veterinary medicine at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota, gave a presentation on research projects related to H5 influenza at UMN.

The research is a cooperative effort with the Board, APHIS-USDA and UMN. Nine research projects were selected largely related to the spread of the virus among cattle and between dairy farms.

The research projects focused on:

- How does virus spread among cattle on the affected farms?
    - Direct contact (shedding patterns)
    - Milk (environmental survival and inactivation)
    - Colostrum (inactivation)
    - Airborne
    - Risk factors and co-infections
    - Virus-host interactions
- How does it spread to dairy farms?
    - Pathways of transmission
    - Infected livestock or poultry farm

Six of the projects depended on detection of the virus in dairy herds and voluntary collaboration with affected dairy producers. The projects aimed to minimize disruption to farm activities, compensate producers for participation, come at no cost to the producers for sampling, and provide anonymity for individual producers.

Funding was put in place by APHIS and the university by February 2025. No new cases of the virus have been detected since the projects were started. The project team switched gears to look at the question of which cattle were previously exposed and potentially resistant to reinfection.

A beef cattle herd that was on a premises with backyard poultry seemed to indicate a lack of transmission between the flock and the herd. The flock tested positive for HPAI in May 2022 and February 2025. The beef cattle were tested, and the virus was not detected in those animals. No evidence for active or previous infection with influenza A was found in the beef cattle on the operation. Poultry and cattle were raised separately, but the poultry flock had free range of the property in warmer seasons.

A dairy operation that was previously infected allowed sampling in August 2025. The premises had tested positive in June 2024 for influenza A. Subsequent testing showed negative results. Researchers performed antibody testing on samples collected from animals that previously showed clinical signs of the virus, and on samples from animals who did not show signs of illness. The goal of the testing was to determine whether

antibodies were present, if differences appeared between cows by history of clinical signs, differences in cows by lactation group and finally to see if any antibodies detected provided any protection against future infection.

Of 205 samples, around half of them were positive for antibodies. Another 13% showed suspect results for antibodies. Around 2/3 of the animals who previously showed clinical signs were antibody positive. Those that did not show clinical signs resulted in about 33% showing positive for antibodies. The results have not been finalized to answer the last question of protection against the virus, as the project is ongoing.

Ms. Sawatzke asked how long the cooperative agreement lasts. Dr. Wells says the agreement has been running for about 6 months and will continue another six months.

Dr. Holzbauer asked if the project could collaborate across state lines with farms. Dr. Wells said it's possible.

Closed Session

The Board went into closed session to conduct hearings on two compliance cases. Upon reopening the meeting, Ms. Sawatzke issued the following statement: "There were two respondents. The first respondent was found to be in good standing. The second respondent's registration will not be renewed as of Jan. 1, 2026."

Adjourn

The fourth quarterly meeting of the Board is scheduled for Dec. 3, 2025, at a location yet to be determined. The first quarterly meeting of 2026 will take place Feb. 4, 2026, at a location yet to be determined.

Ms. Sawatzke asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Hawkins made the motion. Dr. Maynard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Hoefs
Executive Director
State Veterinarian