



February 2025 BAH Update

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
 - Implemented exclusionary fencing requirements.



Immediate concerns



- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
- H5N1 in livestock (dairy)
- Avian Metapneumovirus
- New World Screwworm
- Foot and Mouth Disease

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:



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Round the clock surveillance efforts.
- New case confirmed almost weekly.
 - Winter is typically the “offseason” for HPAI.
- 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, it’s adapting.



H5N1 impact on livestock

- Most significant in dairy industry.
- B3.13 strain receding
- D1.1 strain emerging
 - Found in wild bird surveillance
- Minnesota's milk surveillance strategy.
 - MDA samples
 - Board of Animal Health responds
 - MDH monitors



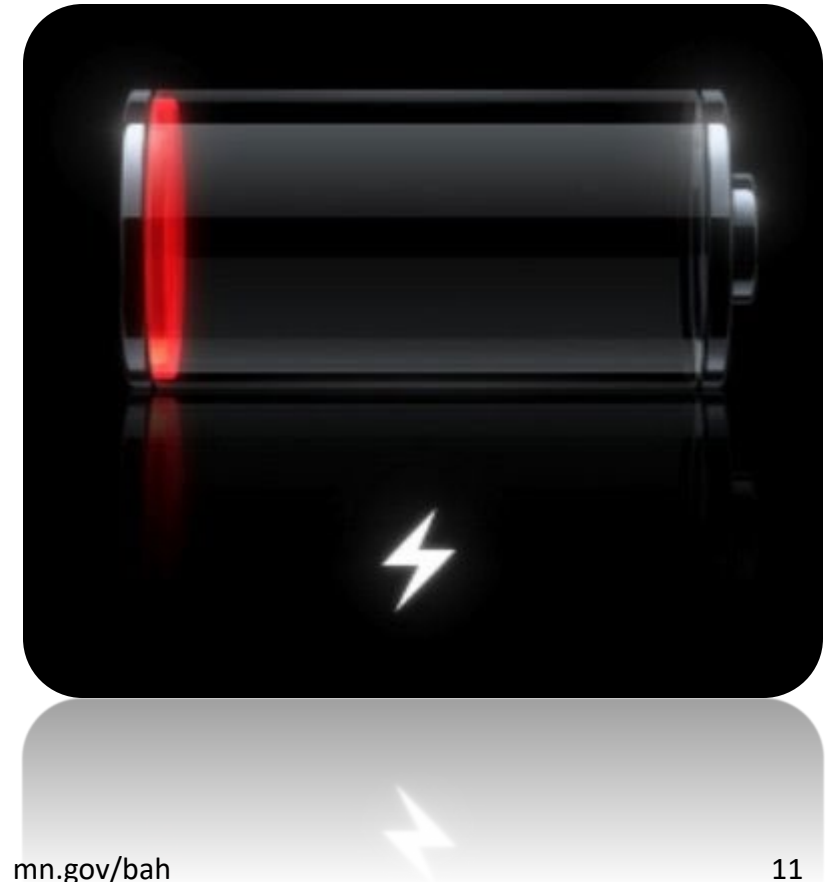
Avian Metapneumovirus (aMPV)

- 871 aMPV positive tests since April 2024.
 - Undercount of cases across Minnesota.
 - Testing not pursued as often due to cost and focus on HPAI.
- aMPV affects poultry.
 - Causes respiratory infections and reproductive disorders.
 - Weaken birds' immune systems leaving them more susceptible to other bacterial or viral infections.
- Coinfections lead to significant mortality and production losses.



Staff burnout

- March 25, 2025: three consecutive years responding to HPAI.
- Board staffing levels equivalent to 2022.
 - Dependent on federal team deployments.
 - Frontline veterinarians and animal health staff.
 - Routine responsibilities not ignored.
- Deeply personal for our workers who are dedicated to caring for animals.
 - Also stressful on producers.



Where this leads us

- 0.02-percent of the state budget is allocated to the Board.
- 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.
- Just HPAI strains Board staff and resources.
- Focus on ensuring the Board has the resources and capabilities to maintain services.



Thank You!

Dr. Brian Hoefs

State Veterinarian and Executive Director