Bird flu detected in US dairy cattle for the first time, milk supply remains unaffected

Multiple U.S. agencies said on [March 29] that for the first time, the rampant bird flu has spread to dairy cattle. Impacted cows have been found across several states as officials reemphasize the importance of only consuming pasteurized dairy products.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the spread of the the bird flu, saying they tested sick cattle from dairy farms in Kansas and Texas. Those tests came back positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which has been impacting bird populations in Europe and Asia since August 2020.

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While impacted cattle are experiencing a decline in how much milk they produce, the government said that so far, the milk loss “is too limited to have a major impact on supply.”

“There should be no impact on the price of milk or other dairy products,” the agencies said. “Further, the U.S. typically has a more than sufficient milk supply in the spring months due to seasonally higher production.”

There is also no concern from the agencies that milk in the commercial supply is unsafe. All milk products must be pasteurized and only milk from healthy animals is allowed to be sent to processing for human consumption, they added.

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