



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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In Lancaster County, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Redding Meet with Pennsylvania Farmers and Ag Leaders, Outlining a Coordinated Response to HPAI to Protect PA's Poultry Industry

The Shapiro Administration has led an aggressive and proactive response to Hi-Path Avian Influenza – and still has nearly \$60 million on hand in its first-in-the-nation HPAI Recovery Fund to support poultry farmers.

Pennsylvania is mobilizing more personnel, expanding testing capacity, and coordinating closely with the USDA and industry partners to protect Pennsylvania's \$7.1 billion poultry industry to suppress this highly infectious disease.

Poultry producers and companies serving them are encouraged to remain on high alert, reinforce biosecurity on their farms, seek HPAI Recovery Grants, and utilize the Farmer Mental Health Hotline for support.



Lancaster, PA – Today, Governor Josh Shapiro and Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) Secretary Russell Redding joined Pennsylvania farmers, poultry producers, key agricultural industry leaders, and state legislators for a roundtable discussion on the **Shapiro Administration's** aggressive, expanded response to a surge in Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) infections.

As the Commonwealth experiences a loss of more than 7.6 million birds since the start of this year, **Governor Shapiro** listened to the concerns of those closest to the HPAI surge, and [last week](#), directed his Administration to mobilize additional personnel, expand testing capacity, and coordinate closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and industry partners.

Pennsylvania remains the only state in the nation with a dedicated HPAI Recovery Fund, designed to help poultry producers stabilize and recover from devastating losses. Since 2022, **\$75 million** has been committed to the fund, with **\$59.4 million** currently in reserve. To date, 302 poultry businesses have received **\$15.6 million** in grants to offset losses, sustain operations, and strengthen biosecurity protections — 150 of those receiving farms have implemented enhanced disease-prevention improvements.

“Pennsylvania’s farmers are the backbone of our communities and I know many are worried about the recent rise in HPAI cases,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “My Administration is working around the clock to expand our rapid response efforts and mitigate this surge. We are deploying more personnel, expanding our testing ability, and coordinating closely with the federal government and our industry partners to ensure we have our poultry farmers’ backs every step of the way.”

The roundtable was held at the **PennAg Industries Rapid Response Center**, which works closely with PDA to support the Commonwealth’s farmers and ag industry. Located in Lancaster, at the heart of Pennsylvania’s \$7.1 billion poultry industry, the Center houses specialized equipment and technology to quickly contain and eliminate disease outbreaks when they occur.

Poultry is the largest sector of Pennsylvania’s **\$132.5 billion** agriculture industry — supporting nearly **48,800 farms** and **almost 600,000 jobs across the Commonwealth**.

“This center and the skilled, ready, and dedicated response team have been indispensable to our ability to respond swiftly and effectively to avian influenza,” said **Secretary Redding**. “The investments Pennsylvania has made — not only to fight the financial toll the virus brings with it, but the human toll on our poultry producers. When the virus hits, they suffer a tremendous financial blow overnight, and they are working round the clock under tremendous strain. We are hopeful that every producer will take advantage of resources like **HPAI Recovery Grants**, and the **Farmer Mental Health Hotline** — both are available to help get us through to a better time, and back in business.”

In addition to working to procure more than **\$380,000** in additional resources to support increased high-volume testing and aggressive biosecurity efforts, over the past week, the **Shapiro Administration** has expanded the team of experts working to contain and suppress the virus and minimize business downtime.

Three Pennsylvania National Guard Civilian Support team members joined **55 Commonwealth veterinarians, other state employees, and four Penn State Extension** experts already dedicated to the response, as well as temporarily reassigning administrative staff and expediting hiring to fill vacancies in support of the response. The expanded team also includes 42 USDA employees and industry leaders. In total, 105 staff are now assigned to mitigating the spread of HPAI.

PennAg Industries Association has also played a critical role in driving HPAI preparedness and response. In addition to managing the **Rapid Response Center**, PennAg serves as **Pennsylvania’s Center for Poultry and Livestock**

Excellence, one of four agricultural centers for excellence collectively supported by a **\$4.1 million investment** in the state budget to provide professional and educational development and research support within specific sectors of the state’s agriculture industry.

“The Rapid Response Center, like all of the resources PennAg provides, is designed to give the targeted expertise, technology, and equipment our poultry and livestock producers need, when they need it, and where it will be the most effective,” said **PennAg Industries Vice President Chris Herr**. “Having established trust and year-round relationships with producers has put us in a position to respond quickly, train farm managers and staff, and work efficiently with government and industry leaders together.”

Pennsylvania’s Rapid Response

When an HPAI case is detected, state animal health teams deploy immediately, alongside partners at the USDA and local emergency management officials. Together, they work to quarantine affected sites, conduct testing, oversee virus elimination, and guide cleaning and disinfection protocols to prevent further spread.

The Commonwealth has also significantly expanded testing and surveillance capacity to meet ongoing demand for avian flu. From July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, Pennsylvania’s Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System (PADLS) **processed 672,342 HPAI tests**, including more than **200,000 poultry samples** and **29,000 cattle samples**, helping ensure swift diagnoses, protect commerce, and minimize economic disruption.

“We’re working to strengthen biosecurity and surveillance through initiatives like the Biosecurity Assurance Program, while expanding partnerships across the poultry industry and with our government and sister agencies,” said **Dr. Alex Hamberg, State Veterinarian**. “Many of the best solutions come from the people who are in the field every day — and the only way we get through this is by working together.”

Since January of 2026, as infections have surged, PADLS has already **performed 8,000 tests** in the last six weeks, **testing 80,000 birds** in less than two months.

Shapiro Administration’s Work to Strengthen Readiness

To further strengthen Pennsylvania’s readiness to respond to potential agricultural disease outbreaks, **Governor Shapiro** secured **\$6 million** in the 2024–25 budget to establish a fourth diagnostic laboratory at Penn State Beaver, which will increase sample surge capacity and improve statewide surveillance, particularly for producers in western Pennsylvania.

In his [2026–27 proposed budget](#), the **Governor** is seeking **\$11 million** for Agricultural Preparedness and Response, including **\$2 million** to support operations at the new lab, fully funding the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission, the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System, including critical partners University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School, and Penn State University College of Agricultural Sciences.

The first piece of legislation **Governor Shapiro** [signed into law](#) last year provided an update to Pennsylvania's animal health laws, helping meet poultry industry needs by expanding the types of samples Certified Poultry Technicians may draw to include those needed to test for HPAI. This has resulted in **211 new workers to meet critical demand** to fight the disease threat, bringing the current total to nearly **900 certified poultry technicians** to fight the disease threat. In addition, there are currently **over 500 producers** trained as HPAI Samplers to collect samples from their flocks during an outbreak.

In February 2025, **Governor Shapiro** also [met with USDA leadership](#), including Secretary Brooke Rollins, and leadership in the Pennsylvania General Assembly to coordinate additional resources and ensure rapid response capacity. The Governor has made clear how Pennsylvania depends on critical partnerships between our state and federal teams when responding to the avian flu – and the Shapiro Administration remains actively engaged with the USDA and Pennsylvania's congressional delegation to secure the resources and assistance our farmers need.

Governor Shapiro and Secretary Redding were also joined by members of Pennsylvania's General Assembly for today's roundtable discussion.

"HPAI poses a serious threat to Pennsylvania's poultry farmers and to the families who depend on their products," said **Senator Judith Schwank, Senate Democratic Ag Chair, PA's 11th Senatorial District**. "The Shapiro administration is responding to this crisis with the urgency it demands by mobilizing the resources necessary to protect our communities and our food supply. Now, more than ever, we need a unified effort to slow the spread of the disease and minimize its impact on our farmers."

"HPAI infections present a severe risk to poultry operations, not only here in Pennsylvania, but across the country. Tackling this crisis requires great teamwork, coordination, and availability of critical resources to help impacted farms and identify new cases to reduce the disease's spread," said **Senator Scott Martin, Senate Republican Appropriations Chair, PA's 13th Senatorial District**. "Both sides of the aisle have worked to ensure we have enough testing and monitoring capacity to protect more flocks from being affected, and have been diligent working cooperatively with the Ag Industry in proactively being prepared and strategically staging resources. Today's roundtable was an important step to keep the lines of communication open and ensure everything is being done to protect poultry operations throughout the state, especially during this critical time."

"I'm grateful for the updates we've received from the Administration since this outbreak began," said **Senator James Malone, PA's 36th Senatorial District**. "I know there's concern among our farmers... and having as much information as possible, so that everyone can do what is most effective for our farmers, is essential."

"Pennsylvania's poultry industry is a cornerstone of our agricultural economy. I, along with the members of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, would like to express our gratitude to Governor Shapiro and his office for their prompt response and efforts to support the farmers as we confront HPAI," said **Representative Eddie Day**

Pashinski, House Democratic Ag Chair, PA's 121st House District. "The General Assembly is committed to working alongside producers, veterinarians, and state agencies to support strong biosecurity, rapid response, and long-term solutions that protect this industry."

"HPAI isn't a red or a blue issue, it impacts everyone in the state. I am appreciative of the quick response and the amount of resources at the ready to battle this virus," said **Representative Dan Moul, House Republican Ag Chair, PA's 91st House District.** "It is impressive to see the speed at which PDA and USDA have come together for the Pennsylvania poultry Industry."

"I would like to thank the Administration for the quick response to the current outbreak of HPAI. I know that the poultry industry is grateful for the resources that have been deployed by both PDA and USDA," said **Representative Brett Miller, PA's 41st House District.** "Having the rapid response center located in our backyard is a Godsend in a situation like this."

What Agricultural Producers Can Do

PDA continues to emphasize the importance of strict adherence to farm-specific biosecurity plans to combat avian flu and reduce the risk of disease.

With wild bird migration increasing seasonal risk, PDA is urging all poultry producers — commercial and backyard — to reinforce preventative measures immediately:

- Limit and track farm access.
- Require protective clothing and footwear for anyone entering poultry areas.
- Clean and disinfect vehicles and equipment.
- Prevent contact between domestic flocks and wild birds.
- Monitor flock health closely and report unexplained illness or death immediately.

Producers should report sick birds or unexplained deaths to 717-772-2852. Anyone encountering sick or dead wild birds should contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission at 1-833-PGC-WILD. Producers may also request free Wildlife Biosecurity Assessments through USDA resources.

HPAI presents very low risk to the general public and poultry products remain safe to consume when properly handled and cooked. However, the virus is highly infectious and generally fatal to domestic birds, making vigilance and rapid response essential.

Producers whose flocks become infected or whose operations are temporarily paused due to nearby detections are encouraged to [apply for HPAI Recovery Grants](#).

"The Recovery Grant we were able to apply for was super helpful for us, as first generation farmers. It was fast, direct, and easy to apply for," said **Heather Lewis, a poultry producer in Pennsylvania.** "There's not another state where we'd feel so supported."

For more information on avian influenza prevention and response resources, visit agriculture.pa.gov.

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