

Ministry of Health

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October 22, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health, Public Health Units

FROM: Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

RE: Letters to Ontario's Livestock Industries, Animal Shelters, and Those Working Closely with Wildlife

The purpose of this memorandum is to share copies of updated letters issued to livestock industry producers, animal shelter workers, and those working closely with wildlife, in Ontario.

The letters were distributed through partners at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA), the Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and Indigenous Services Canada.

The letters outline several recommendations to these industries, with the aim of decreasing the likelihood of genetic reassortment events occurring between human influenza (flu) viruses and animal influenza viruses. The recommendations are:

- priority access to seasonal flu vaccinations for all those who engage in occupational or recreational activities which may increase their risk of exposure to birds or mammals infected with avian flu;
- the use of screening posters at entry and exit points to ensure that workers or visitors who are sick with flu-like illness avoid all contact with livestock, shelter

animals, and live wildlife, for 24 hours after their symptoms have resolved (48 hours for those with gastrointestinal symptoms);

- workers showing signs of respiratory illness/flu-like illness after handling livestock, shelter animals, or wildlife, contact their healthcare provider and inform them of their exposure to animals;
- personal protective equipment should be worn when working with sick animals to prevent infection; and
- concerns about ill animals in their care should be directed to their veterinarian (and in some cases, OMAFA).

Copies of the screening posters are attached for your reference.

These letters and screening posters have been shared with the aforementioned industry partners. In the meantime, we request your support in reinforcing these messages to livestock industry producers, animal shelters, and any other groups or organizations that work closely with wildlife, within your jurisdiction.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Infectious Diseases Policy and Programs Unit via email at IDPP@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your contribution and collaboration with local partners.

Sincerely,



Dr. Daniel Warshafsky MD, MPH, CCFP (SEM), Dip Sport Med, FRCPC
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

C: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister,
Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health,
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