

Introduced by Senator Baldwin

Wildlife-Agriculture Disease Prevention Act of 2024

The bill would increase inter-agency coordination prior to and during wildlife disease outbreaks in order to prevent transmission into livestock and humans.

Wildlife diseases with zoonotic potential are a significant threat to livestock and domestic animals, as well as humans, which is evidenced by the fact that three out of every four new or emerging infectious diseases in human populations originate from animals. Most recently, in March 2024, the first reported cow-to-human case of highly pathogenic avian flu was identified after the human encountered herds believed to be infected by wild birds. Prior HPAI outbreaks have also taken a significant economic toll, with the 2022 avian flu outbreak resulting in economic costs of \$3,000,000,000.

These outbreaks have demonstrated the need for proactive efforts to address wildlife diseases, especially those with zoonotic potential, to prevent spillover into livestock and human populations. Increased inter-agency coordination, as well as greater communication between Federal agencies, States, and Tribes will facilitate more comprehensive and effective responses to zoonotic diseases, helping prevent significant outbreaks.

The Solution:

This Wildlife-Agriculture Disease Prevention Act of 2024 requires greater interagency coordination on zoonotic diseases by creating a Wildlife-Agriculture Disease Coordinator. The coordinator's purpose is to increase communication between those agencies on the frontlines of animal and human health, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other relevant federal and state agencies regarding current and emerging wildlife disease outbreaks. This position will be housed within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and will serve as a liaison among the aforementioned agencies. More specifically, the coordinator will:

- **Establish relationships** with relevant Federal agencies, States, and Indian Tribes
- **Facilitate information sharing** about existing and emerging zoonotic disease outbreaks between States, Tribes, and Federal agencies (including USDA, USFWS, and the CDC)
- **Assist States and Tribes** in applying for funding to work on wildlife disease issues
- **Coordinate between States**, including state agencies that work on agriculture, environment, natural resources, and public health
- **Share best management practices** for zoonotic disease management and prevention
- **Report to Congress** on necessary resources and response activities for preventing and mitigating wildlife diseases

Endorsements: American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Ducks Unlimited, Izaak Walton League of America, MacFarlane Pheasants Inc., Midwest Dairy Coalition, National Farmers Union, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Turkey Federation, National Wild Turkey Federation, North American Gamebird Association, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wisconsin Game Preserve Association, Wisconsin Pork Producers Association, Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine