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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 20 JUNE 2026

Avicena Ready to Support WA Producers and Health Authorities as H5 Bird Flu Confirmed in Australia

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEDTECH'S SENTINEL PLATFORM INCLUDES A PAN-INFLUENZA MOLECULAR TEST THAT DETECTS AVIAN INFLUENZA

West Australian specialist biosecurity company, Avicena Systems, stands ready to support producers, health organisations and authorities across Australia following the confirmed detection of the highly pathogenic H5 strain of avian influenza in Western Australia.

On 20 June 2026, the Australian Government announced two cases of H5 avian influenza in wild migratory birds in southern Western Australia. The CSIRO's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) confirmed the H5 strain, marking the first detection of H5 on mainland Australia.

Avicena's automated Sentinel platform includes a pan-influenza molecular test capable of identifying highly pathogenic H5N1 influenza and distinguishing it from other influenza subtypes. Built on rapid, accurate LAMP chemistry and compatible with direct sample loading, the test enables fast, high-throughput screening that can be deployed at scale. The rapid, mobile testing capability is now available for field validation against existing laboratory testing protocols, in collaboration with biosecurity regulatory agencies.

H5N1 influenza has led to the culling of more than 160 million poultry globally since 2022, including over one million hens in Australia alone, driving egg shortages and double-digit price rises for consumers.

In the United States, H5N1 has been confirmed in more than 1,000 dairy cattle herds and detected in retail milk samples (non-infectious once pasteurised). With H5 now on the Australian mainland, a similar spillover into local dairy and livestock cannot be ruled out – underscoring the need for surveillance beyond poultry.

Avicena is ready to equip poultry and livestock producers, veterinary and wildlife services, and state health authorities with the screening tools needed to detect, monitor and contain avian influenza early – protecting industry, wildlife and public health alike.

Tony Fitzgerald, CEO of Avicena, said early, accurate and scalable testing is the foundation of an effective biosecurity response.

"The sentiment in the industry is that the inevitable H5 incursion is here. As the government emphasises, we must continue surveillance to safeguard our essential food industries and public health. Avicena is an Australian biosecurity company with a proven, ready-to-deploy platform that can screen for avian influenza at the speed and scale an outbreak demands. We stand ready to work alongside WA producers, health organisations and government agencies to safeguard our community and food security," Mr Fitzgerald said.

Dr Paul Watt, Avicena's Executive Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer, said the Sentinel platform was designed precisely for the specific, scalable, and affordable identification of emerging pathogen threats of this kind, with results automatically reported within minutes and test sensitivity comparable to PCR.

"Sentinel's molecular influenza screening platform specifically detects H5N1 avian influenza alongside other influenza types using the same rapid, next-generation (LAMP) chemistry that underpins all of our Sentinel tests.

"This technology can be adapted and scaled quickly to new threats, which is exactly what containment of a novel outbreak requires. This technology was used to develop our rapid automated test for lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which was independently validated last year on our Sentinel instrument at the ACDP by the CSIRO and shown to have PCR-like analytical sensitivity directly from nasal samples," Dr Watt said.

Avicena welcomes similar opportunities to benchmark its innovative pathogen screening technology in collaboration with Australia's biosecurity agencies to contribute to our response to the H5 threat, given there is no competing technology offering a peak screening capacity exceeding 5,000 tests per hour, while automatically reporting test results within 30 minutes directly from samples without requiring a laboratory.

Avicena supports national guidance that members of the public should not touch sick or dead birds or other animals and should report sightings to authorities. The company is engaging with industry and government partners to ensure that screening capacity is available where needed.

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About Avicena Systems

Watch our video to learn more and see Sentinel in action: ***https://avicenasystems.com/video-sentinel/***

Avicena Systems is a Perth-based biosecurity technology company that has developed the ground-breaking Sentinel pathogen screening platform. Avicena's award-winning Sentinel system combines the best features of Molecular and Rapid Antigen tests into an integrated, scalable, and affordable solution, ideal for large-scale surveillance screening across a broad spectrum of human and animal pathogen threats.

The end-to-end automated platform offers a unique surge capability, efficiently processing 10 to 5,000 samples per hour on-demand, using LAMP chemistry suitable for various sample types, including saliva, nasal swabs, blood, and skin lesions.

Based on LAMP (Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification), a sensitive molecular diagnostic technology similar to PCR, Sentinel can readily adapt to detect various human and animal pathogens, including H5N1 Avian Flu, Influenza A/B, RSV, COVID-19*, and Dengue in humans, as well as exotic animal diseases such as Lumpy Skin Disease, Foot and Mouth Disease, and African Swine Fever.

Avicena has ISO 13485 accreditation for the manufacture of diagnostics, and the Sentinel instrument is listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to run ARTG-listed IVD tests performed by authorised professionals.

Avicena's rapid-response systems offer a cost-effective and scalable means of fortifying biosecurity defences and managing the risk of outbreaks.

* Dewhurst et al., (2022) Validation of a rapid, saliva-based, and ultra-sensitive SARS-CoV-2 screening system for pandemic-scale infection surveillance. Scientific Reports https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-08263-4

Images and video clips of the Sentinel are available upon request