



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# National Disease Control Centre

## Avian Influenza Alert

Number 7 of 2020

## **Avian Influenza Alert Number 7 of 2020 27 March 2020**

### **1. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8- Europe**

Since AI Alert No. 6 issued on 12/03/2020 the following outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 have been confirmed in Europe:

#### **Germany:**

- One outbreak in captive birds in Leipzig region confirmed 12/03/2020. Of 44 birds on the holding (6 ducks and 38 chickens) 24 died and the remainder were culled.
- One outbreak on a commercial turkey breeder farm with 10579 birds, in the Aurich region near the Dutch border, confirmed 20/03/2020.
- A wild bird (a common buzzard) tested positive for H5N8 in the Leipzig region 21/03/2020.
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#### **Bulgaria**

- One outbreak in a flock of 17,000 laying hens in the Kardzhali region confirmed on 11/03/2020
- Another outbreak in a flock of 39000 laying hens in the Plovdiv region, confirmed on 12/03/2020.

#### **Poland**

- One outbreak in a flock of 94,000 thirteen week old turkeys in the Sulecinski region, confirmed 24/03/2020

#### **Hungary**

- One outbreak in a duck farm with 15,545 eleven day old ducks was confirmed on 25/03/2020 in the Bacs-Kiskun region.
- A further four secondary outbreaks were confirmed in duck farms in the same region.

In all cases disease control measures in accordance with Directive 2005/94/EC have been implemented including establishment of protection and surveillances zones where applicable. A table summarising the total number of outbreaks of H5N8 in Europe in 2020 to date is included with this alert.





Map of H5N8 outbreaks in:

Poultry

Captive birds

## 2. Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza H6N1

### Outbreaks in Ireland

- DAFM has now confirmed Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) of the H6N1 subtype in a total of **five flocks** in County Monaghan
- Four of the outbreaks involved commercial egg layer flocks and one involved fattening turkeys.
- Presenting clinical signs have included:
  - Significant drop in egg production (all cases where relevant)
  - Reduced feed intake
  - Mild depression (some cases)
  - Green diarrhoea (one case)
  - Slight increase in mortality.
- All five holdings have since been derestricted under the Avian Influenza legislation as the H6N1 subtype is not included in the definition of notifiable avian influenza at EU level<sup>1</sup>.
- The flocks remain restricted under Irish law however and are subject to compliance with certain requirements in order to prevent further disease spread.

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#### <sup>1</sup> Avian influenza- legal requirements on notification and controls explained

Avian influenza is defined in EU law in and the OIE Terrestrial code for the purposes of notification, control, eradication and trade. Notifiable avian influenza includes all influenza A viruses of the H5 or H7 subtypes, whether they are low pathogenic or highly pathogenic. It also includes non H5 or H7 subtypes, provided they are classified as highly pathogenic following a specific testing regime set out in the legislation. **Under these rules the H6N1 subtype of avian influenza in this case is not deemed to be notifiable to the EU or the OIE as it is not a H5 or H7 subtype and testing has confirmed that it is not highly pathogenic (this is also supported by the clinical picture).** Therefore there is no legal requirement to cull affected flocks or to introduce the same high level controls required by other notifiable subtypes of avian influenza such as H5N8 or H5N1.



- Culling of birds has taken place in all five flocks – note this is a commercial decision on behalf of the flock owners.

### Outbreaks in Northern Ireland

- The authorities in Northern Ireland have confirmed a total of 14 outbreaks of LPAI H6N1 since the beginning of January with one further suspect case under investigation.
- Areas affected include Fermanagh, Tyrone, Armagh and Down.

### 3. Advice to flock owners

The continued spread of H5N8 in Europe, as well as the increase in number of outbreaks LPAI H6N1 here and in Northern Ireland serve as a reminder to all poultry industry stakeholders that vigilance is needed against avian influenza particularly during the high risk period for the disease.

All flock owners should monitor their flocks closely for signs of disease and consult their private veterinarian or local Regional Veterinary Office if they have concerns. Note that the presenting signs for H6N1 can be relatively mild and **flocks presenting with any of the clinical signs of avian influenza should be reported to DAFM so that a full investigation can be carried out in order to rule out the presence of notifiable disease.**

Flock owners, particularly those located in the area affected by H6N1 and surrounding high density poultry areas (Monaghan, Cavan & Louth) should review their individual risk for avian influenza and ensure strict mitigating biosecurity measures are in place to prevent the disease spreading to their flocks. Specific heightened biosecurity measures are available at: <http://bit.ly/DAFM-AvianFluAdvice>

### 4. Further information

For information on avian influenza clinical signs and specific biosecurity advice please see:

[https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian\\_influenza/](https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/)

To contact DAFM regional offices:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

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