



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

Avian Influenza Alert

Number 6 of 2020



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Avian Influenza

1. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8- Europe

- **Czech Republic** confirmed their second outbreak of HPAI H5N8 on the 16 February on a commercial farm of 137,500 turkeys and broilers.
- **Bulgaria** reported their first outbreak on the 17 February on a commercial farm of 15,792 ducks in Plovdiv. Five more outbreaks have been confirmed in the same region of Plovdiv involving 3 commercial duck farms with over 20,000 ducks in total and the other two other poultry holdings with over 86,000 birds.
- **Poland** have confirmed twelve new outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 since 13/02/2020. Ten involving commercial duck farms with 190,000 ducks. The subsequent two outbreaks were one commercial farm with 4,372 geese, ducks, broiler chickens, hens and a backyard flock with 74 laying hens.
- The total number of outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 in Europe is 52.
- The table attached summarises the outbreaks of H5N8 in Europe year to date.
- **In addition to outbreaks in Europe, Saudi Arabia** has confirmed one outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in poultry and **Israel** confirmed H5N8 in an eagle.

2. Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza H6N1

Outbreaks in Ireland

- DAFM has confirmed Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) of the H6N1 subtype in two commercial egg layer flocks in County Monaghan.
- Two more flocks are restricted in the Monaghan area and are being investigated as suspects for avian influenza- preliminary results suggest the presence of LPAI H6N1.
- The flocks include three table egg layer flocks and one flock of fattening turkeys.
- Presenting clinical signs include:
 - Significant drop in egg production
 - Reduced feed intake
 - Mild depression
 - Green diarrhoea (one case)
 - Slight increase in mortality.
- All four holdings are currently restricted regarding movements onto or off the premises.
- Culling of birds has commenced in the case of two of the flocks – note this is a commercial decision on behalf of the flock owners.
- Culling of birds is likely for the remaining flocks also.

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.

However, restrictions on the movement of poultry and poultry products onto and off the site are currently in place on affected holdings as a precautionary measure to mitigate against the spread of this disease to other locations.

Outbreaks in Northern Ireland

- The authorities in Northern Ireland have confirmed a total of 12 outbreaks of LPAI H6N1 since the beginning of January.
- Areas affected include Fermanagh, Tyrone and Newry.
- Affected flocks include table egg layers and broiler breeders.

3. Advice to flock owners

The spread of H5N8 in Europe, as well as the outbreaks of non notifiable avian influenza here and in Northern Ireland serve as a reminder to all stakeholders that vigilance is needed against avian influenza particularly as we are still within 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 should also review their individual risk and ensure strict mitigating biosecurity measures are in place.

4. Further information

For information on avian influenza clinical signs and biosecurity advice please see:
https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/

To contact DAFM regional offices:
<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>



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