



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

National Disease Control Centre

Avian Influenza Alert

Number 10 of 2020

28/07/2020

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Avian Influenza

1. Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza H6N1

Outbreaks in Ireland

- On the 22/06/2020, DAFM confirmed another case of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) of the H6N1 subtype in a poultry flock in County Monaghan
- This brings the total number of LPAI H6N1 outbreaks to 14
- The confirmed flocks include 11 table egg layer flocks, 2 fattening turkey flocks and 1 turkey breeder flock.
- Presenting clinical signs in affected flocks have included:
 - Significant drop in egg production
 - Reduced feed intake
 - Mild depression (occasionally)
 - Green diarrhoea (one case only)
 - Slight increase in mortality
- All 14 holdings have been derestricted under the Avian Influenza Legislation as the H6N1 subtype is not included in the definition of a notifiable avian influenza at EU level.
- Recently confirmed cases remain restricted under Irish Law and are subject to compliance with certain requirements in order to prevent further disease spread.
- Culling of birds has occurred in the case of all the flocks – note this is a commercial decision on behalf of the flock owners.

LPAI H6N1- Ireland's avian influenza disease status is not affected

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 Ireland's Avian Influenza disease status is not affected by these outbreaks** and 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 recently affected holdings as a precautionary measure to mitigate against the spread of this disease to other locations.

2. Advice to flock owners

The recent outbreaks of non notifiable LPAI H6N1 here in Ireland are a reminder to all stakeholders that vigilance is needed against avian influenza.

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.

3. Biosecurity

The implementation of stringent biosecurity is critically important for the prevention of an outbreak of Avian Influenza especially during periods of heightened risk. In order to ensure measures are effective, poultry owners should **assess the risk for their individual premises** and design their own biosecurity plan to include measures for the prevention and control of Avian Influenza. This will involve the preparation of written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), detailing the preventative actions to be taken in key risk areas.

[DAFM – Biosecurity Advice during high risk periods](#)

4. Further information

For information on avian influenza:

[DAFM - Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\)](#)

To contact DAFM regional offices:

[DAFM - Contact](#)

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