



## AI Alert: 04/2020

### Current situation with non notifiable LPAI H6N1 in Northern Ireland.

- A total of two outbreaks of non notifiable LPAI H6N1 in poultry have been confirmed in Northern Ireland (1 additional confirmed outbreak since AI Alert 02/2020, issued 16/01/2020).
- The outbreaks occurred in a broiler breeder flock and an egg layer flock in Co Fermanagh.
- A further 8 poultry flocks in Fermanagh and Tyrone are under investigation by the authorities in Northern Ireland.

### Clinical Presentation

The presenting clinical picture in affected flocks is generally mild including:

- Increased mortality rate (low level).
- Dull, listless birds, green diarrhoea (a key feature).
- Decreased egg production.

### Notifiable versus non-notifiable avian influenza

Avian influenza is defined in EU law in the OIE Terrestrial code for the purposes of notification, control and eradication. 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 and introduce the same controls as required by other notifiable subtypes of avian influenza such as H5N8 or H5N6.

**It should be noted however that 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 avian influenza.** RVO contact details can be found here: <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

### Advice to flock owners

DAFM is liaising closely with authorities in Northern Ireland. The advice to flock owners is to remain vigilant to the threat of avian influenza especially during the high risk winter period, in particular:

1. **Be vigilant- monitor your birds carefully for any clinical signs of disease. Signs of avian influenza include:**

- Death / high mortalities in a flock
- Depression/lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling
- Blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Diarrhoea
- Reduced/no eggs production.

If in doubt contact your veterinary practitioner or DAFM Regional Veterinary Office for advice.

## 2. Biosecurity is key, here is the advice:

### People:

- Wear disposable or dedicated outer clothing when in contact with your birds
- Wear boots that can be disinfected, disposable gloves and wash hands after contact with poultry
- Only allow essential personnel access to your birds.

### Buildings and equipment

- Regularly clean and disinfect hard surfaces such as paths and walkways
- Provide clean boot washing and disinfection facilities at all entrances/exits and ensure that people use them
- Clean and disinfect any vehicles or equipment that comes into contact with the birds after use
- Have suitable pest control in place.

### Wild Birds

- Minimise access to the flock by wild birds -
- Feed and water birds inside or at least under cover
- Clean up any waste feed in outdoor areas frequently
- Consider using netting or wild bird decoys or deterrents to keep wild birds away from poultry areas.

### Management

- Keep ducks and geese separate to other poultry species if possible
- Register your birds with DAFM so you can receive vital information in the event of an increased risk.

**NDCC & Border Inspection Posts Division**  
**07 February 2020**

**Further information**

Specific biosecurity advice for different types of poultry flocks can be found here:

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

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