

DEPARTMENT REVIEW OF COMPULSORY CONFINEMENT OF POULTRY AND CAPTIVE BIRDS

(23 January 2017)

Following a review of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 situation, it has been decided that the requirement to keep poultry and captive birds confined in Ireland will remain in place. This is due to the continued findings of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in wild birds in Ireland, and is considered necessary to protect the high health status of the larger national poultry flock. These measures will remain in place until further notice.

As confining birds will not fully protect birds from the introduction of the virus, all flock owners are also required to implement biosecurity measures:

1. measures are taken to reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry or captive birds are kept to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products,
2. effective vermin control programmes, including preventing the entry of wild and domestic animals such as dogs or cats, around buildings where poultry or captive birds are kept, are implemented,
3. feed and bedding intended for the poultry or captive birds is stored in such a way that it cannot be accessed by animals or other birds including wild birds,
4. any person who has had contact with poultry or other captive birds must take all reasonable precautions to avoid the transfer of contamination between premises and secure buildings; this includes cleansing and disinfection of equipment, vehicles and footwear,
5. disinfection points containing a disinfectant that is effective against avian influenza viruses and reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines, are kept at all entry and exit points to the premises and the secure buildings or areas where poultry or captive birds are kept,
6. steps are taken to prevent access to the premises or secure buildings by wild birds by providing feed and water to the poultry or captive birds in such a way that is not accessible to wild birds, preventing overgrowth of vegetation or accumulation of uncovered water on the premises, and by removing any other thing that might attract wild birds from the premises such as fallen fruit or uneaten feed,
7. housing and equipment is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected using a disinfectant that is effective against avian influenza viruses at the right concentration, at the end of a production cycle,

These measures apply to all flocks, including backyard flocks. Specific biosecurity advice for backyard flocks (as well as ducks, geese and turkeys) can be found on the Department's website.

The Department urges flock owners to remain vigilant in their efforts to protect their birds from the threat of Avian Influenza.

Gatherings of birds for shows, exhibitions and races is permitted, subject to advance notification and compliance with biosecurity measures.

Similar measures have also been introduced in Northern Ireland, and will remain in place until 11:59 on March 16th 2017.

Further Reading:

1. Avian influenza information:
http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/avianinfluenzanews/
2. Biosecurity advice for back yard poultry keepers:
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/avianinfluenzabirdflu/informationforthegeneralpublic/BackyardPoultryLeaflet110117.pdf>
3. Bird gatherings:
http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/informationonshowsexhibitionsraces/
4. An Avian Influenza leaflet:
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/avianinfluenzabirdflu/informationforthegeneralpublic/AvianInfluenzaLeaflet110117.pdf>
5. An information leaflet on Avian Influenza control measures:
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/avianinfluenzabirdflu/informationforthegeneralpublic/4621AvianInfluenza.pdf>
6. The Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural affairs:
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/avian-influenza-prevention-zone-extended-0>