

Avian Influenza - December 2016

Introduction

Outbreaks of a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) have been confirmed in poultry and wild birds in several countries across Europe. Four outbreaks of HPAI have been found in the UK and as a precautionary measure the Government Chief Vets of England, Wales & Scotland have declared Prevention Zones (PZ) across the whole of Great Britain. The objective of the PZ is to prevent infection of poultry and captive birds from wild birds by introducing enhanced biosecurity requirements. The zone will remain in place until 28 February 2017 at least.

Public Health England advises that the threat to human health remains very low.

Because it represents the route of greatest risk for the importation of avian flu to the Bailiwick, the States Veterinary Officer (SVO) has decided to stop the importation of live birds while the PZ is in place.

The SVO has issued the following biosecurity advice. All controls will be kept under close review in the coming weeks.

Guidance Notes for Bailiwick Poultry Keepers

Bird keepers are responsible for the welfare of their birds. Following the declaration of a prevention zone in Great Britain poultry keepers are advised to maintain good biosecurity on their premises, minimise the possibility of wild birds contaminating the environment, feed or drinking water of poultry and to remain vigilant for signs of disease and contact their private veterinary practitioner should they have any concerns.

1. Husbandry

- Keepers are advised to take measures to avoid their poultry coming into direct or indirect contact with wild birds.
- Where it is possible to house poultry without compromising their welfare they should be housed for the period that a high or moderate risk of contracting avian influenza exists.
- Housing carries a high to moderate risk of compromising the welfare of water fowl and turkeys, game birds and peacocks. For these species other biosecurity measures should be put in place to avoid them coming into direct or indirect contact with wild birds. This may include:
 - Creating pens with covered tops and side netting that will keep small wild birds from entering the pens.

- Moving feeding and watering stations indoors or under shelter.
- Deploying measures to deter wild birds from mingling with kept birds.
- Controlling the intrusion of feral poultry.
- Creating covered shelters.
- Enhance existing biosecurity measures. This may include:
 - Ensuring that housing is secure and prevents access to vermin, birds and unauthorised persons.
 - Isolation pens for diseased poultry.
 - Vermin and insect control.
 - Secure feed containers.
 - Diligent removal of uneaten and contaminated feed.
 - Avoid unnecessary visitors and deliveries.
 - Boot washes which are regularly refreshed with approved disinfectant at the appropriate dilution required to control HPAI such as 'Virkon S Tablets'. See disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/
 - Avoid contact between disposed manure, spent bedding and other birds.

NB: It is essential that keepers continue to practice good biosecurity all year around not just in the winter when there is an increased risk of avian influenza. Wild birds can introduce many serious diseases into poultry flocks including Salmonella, Campylobacter, Newcastle disease, Avian Tuberculosis and endoparasitic disease.

2. Gatherings

- Organisers of poultry gatherings or shows are advised to undertake a risk assessment a week before the event. If the risk of poultry contracting avian influenza is high or moderate the event should be cancelled.
- Organisers of poultry gatherings or shows are welcome to consult with the States Veterinary Officer with regard to risk assessments but ultimately the decision to proceed or not with a gathering or show is up to the organisers
- Should circumstances change following a risk assessment then another risk assessment should be undertaken.

3. Imports

- The importation of live poultry from Member States of the European Community is regulated under Article 1 (1) (a) of The Import (Control) (Guernsey) Order, 2010. Specifically Schedule 7, 'Goods that cannot be imported without a licence', 'miscellaneous goods', paragraph, 7. Any Live Animal.
 - Import licences will not be issued where a country or territory is subject to restrictions in relation to avian influenza.
 - The whole of Great Britain (England, Scotland & Wales) was declared a Prevention Zone on the 6 December 2016. The zone will remain in place until at least 28 February 2017 when another risk assessment will be undertaken.

- **The presence of restrictions in relation to avian influenza in Great Britain means that import licenses for poultry from these countries will not be issued until restrictions are removed.**
- If there is a decision to lift the protection zone in Great Britain following the risk assessment on 28 February 2017 then we will commence issuing import licenses for poultry.
- The importation of live poultry from Jersey, Alderney or Sark is regulated under the General Import Licence 2014/01. Specifically paragraph 1.9.
 - A condition of importation is that these Islands are not subject to restrictions in relation to avian influenza.
 - **Currently the Islands of Jersey, Alderney and Sark do not have any restrictions in relation to avian influenza therefore poultry can be imported from these Islands.**

4. Records

- If you keep poultry you should register your flock with the competent authorities. You should provide the species kept and the numbers kept.
 - Guernsey: Caroline Creed Caroline.Creed@gov.gg
 - Alderney: Sue Price Sue.Price@gov.gg
 - Sark: Gavin Nicolle nicollesark@cwgsy.net
- Registered poultry keepers will be provided with information and updates from the competent authorities and the SVO to protect the health and welfare of their birds.

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