



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Finlay Carson
Convenor
Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment
Committee

By email -
rural.committee@parliament.scot

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Dear Finlay,

I am writing to further update you on the ongoing avian influenza cases we are seeing in the UK. An outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 was confirmed by the Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland last night, 6 July 2022 and involved a small commercial, free-range, backyard layer flock of approximately 26 chickens near Birsay, Orkney Islands.

As a result, the Scottish Government activated its contingency plans to control and eradicate the disease. A veterinary investigation was carried out to establish the source and the potential spread of the disease. All of the birds on the premises have been humanely euthanised and the owner of the premises is receiving support and guidance from Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) officials.

As a result, Scottish Ministers have implemented a 3 km Protection Zone (PZ) and a 10 km Surveillance Zone (SZ) in accordance with the Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals (Scotland) Order 2006. [This Declaration](#) took effect on 6 July 2022 at 18:50.

This was the eleventh outbreak of HPAI H5N1 in Scotland within the 2021/2022 outbreak season. Since 27 October 2021, there have been 124 confirmed infected premises (IPs) within the UK: eleven in Scotland, five in Wales, six in Northern Ireland and 102 in England. There have also been over 1,375 wild bird findings of HPAI H5N1, with over 508 of these in Scotland.

As you may know, risk assessments are regularly carried out to assess the risk of poultry and captive bird exposure to HPAI H5 across Great Britain. The risk of incursion of HPAI H5 infection in wild birds remains at MEDIUM. The risk of poultry and captive bird exposure to HPAI H5 across Great Britain remains at MEDIUM where biosecurity is sub-optimal, and LOW where stringent biosecurity measures are applied.

As you are aware, in response to the initial outbreaks of HPAI H5N1, Chief Veterinary Officers from Scotland, England and Wales declared an [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone](#) (AIPZ)

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across the whole of Great Britain on 3 November 2021 to mitigate the risk of the disease spreading amongst poultry and captive birds which includes a range of strict biosecurity measures designed to limit the spread of and eradicate the disease.

The risk to the general public's health from avian influenza is **very low**. However, the risk to people with **intensive exposure** to infected birds is considered to be low. Food Standards Scotland advises that avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for consumers, and it does not affect the consumption of poultry products, including eggs.

Any suspicion of a notifiable disease, such as avian influenza, should be reported immediately to the [local APHA field office](#).

If **three or more** dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks), a **single** dead bird of prey, or **five** or more dead wild birds of any other species (including gulls) are found at the same place at the same time, they should be reported to GB-wide telephone helpline run by Defra: 03459 33 55 77. **It is advisable that these birds are not touched.**

As you already know, in Great Britain, anyone that keeps poultry or captive birds is legally required to register their birds on the GB Poultry Register if they keep more than 50 birds. Keepers with less than 50 birds are strongly encouraged to register. It is also a legal requirement to notify APHA of any significant changes in the average number of birds kept. Further information can be found www.gov.scot/avianinfluenza.

Needless to say, should you have any questions, my officials will be able to answer these. In the first instance, you should contact Sheila Voas, Chief Veterinary Officer Scotland.

Yours Sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON