



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

Avian Influenza Update

15th January 2021

National Disease Control Centre

Number 01 of 2021

Avian Influenza Regulations remain in effect in Ireland

- On December 21st 2020, new regulations were introduced which require biosecurity measures to be taken regarding the confinement of poultry and captive birds to help mitigate the risk of avian influenza. DAFM published [FAQ's](#) for poultry owners relating to the **Avian Influenza (Precautionary Confinement of Birds) Regulations 2020 (SI No.663 of 2020)** which are available on the Gov.ie website
- Additional biosecurity regulations were also introduced in December to help protect poultry and captive birds from avian influenza. (*SI No.566 of 2020*) and a [guidance document](#) is available to view on the Avian influenza page of the Gov.ie website. A ban on bird gatherings, marts and assemblies for the purposes of show or sale is also currently in place (*SI No.567 of 2020*)

NB. The highest levels of biosecurity are imperative during this high risk period for Avian influenza in all flocks irrespective of size

Avian Influenza – Current Situation in Ireland

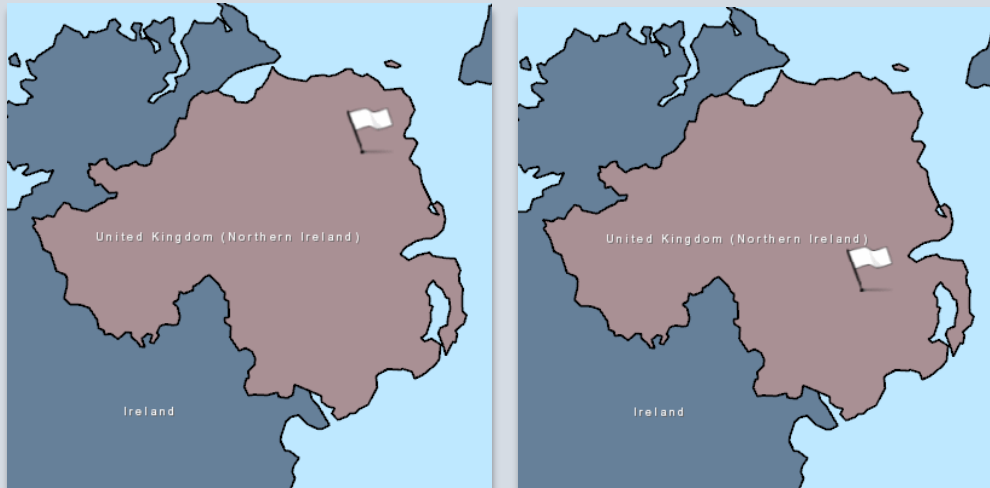
- The restriction zones which were introduced within a 10 km radius of the confirmed avian influenza outbreak in a turkey flock in Wicklow were lifted on 14th January 2021
- There have been no further outbreaks of avian influenza H5N8 confirmed in poultry or captive birds in the Republic of Ireland since that single outbreak which occurred on 10th December 2020
- However, there have been further cases of avian influenza H5N8 confirmed in wild birds nationally and **wild birds continue to pose a significant risk for the spread of the disease to poultry and captive birds**. Figure 3 below detail the outbreaks to date in 2021/2021

Avian Influenza – Current Situation in Northern Ireland

- There have been two separate confirmed outbreaks of avian influenza HPAI H5N8 in poultry flocks in Northern Ireland
- Avian influenza was suspected on 31st December 2020 in egg laying rearer pullets on a commercial holding comprising approx 32500 birds in Co. Antrim. The flock was depopulated. Avian influenza HPAI H5N8 was confirmed on 7th January 2021. Control measures were introduced including a 3 km Protection zone and 10 km Surveillance zone surrounding the infected holding (see Figure 1)
- A second outbreak of HPAI H5N8 was confirmed in a commercial egg layer holding in Co. Antrim on 11th January 2021 comprising approx 31,000 birds. Control measures implemented include the depopulation of the affected flock and the introduction of a

Protection zone(3km) and a Surveillance Zone (10km) surrounding the affected holding (see Figure 2).

*Figure 1 below left: First outbreak of avian influenza HPAI H5N8 confirmed in Northern Ireland
Figure 2 below right: Second outbreak location of avian influenza HPAI H5N8 confirmed in Co. Antrim
Maps courtesy of ADNS*



Avian influenza in wild birds in Ireland

- A total of 23 wild birds have been confirmed with HPAI H5N8 since it was first detected on 10th November 2020



*Figure 3
Left:*

*Map of
confirmed
HPAI
H5N8
cases in
Ireland
since 10th
November
2020*

- Wild bird species confirmed with HPAI H5N8 in Ireland include the following: whooper swan, mute swan, barnacle goose, curlew, cormorant and peregrine falcon

Risk to Ireland regarding HPAI H5N8

- The disease is **highly contagious for birds**
- The disease poses **no food safety risk for consumers**. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat
- **Strict biosecurity measures are needed** to prevent the introduction of AI into poultry and captive bird flocks
- Flock owners should **remain vigilant for any signs of disease** in their flocks, and report any disease suspicion to their nearest [Regional Veterinary Office](#)
- **Members of the public are advised not to handle sick or dead wild birds. Please report sick or dead wild birds to the local Regional Veterinary Office or contact the DAFM disease hotline on 1850 200456**

What can poultry owners do to reduce the risk of avian influenza?

- 1. Be vigilant-** Monitor your birds carefully for any clinical signs of disease. If in doubt contact your veterinary practitioner for advice. 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
- Swelling and blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Diarrhoea
- Reduced egg production or no egg production

2. Increase Biosecurity

[Biosecurity guidance to help prevent avian influenza](#) including clinical signs and leaflets can be found on the Gov.ie website

Personnel and Visitors

- 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

- 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
- Register your birds with DAFM so you can receive vital information in the event of an increased risk
- Use an [approved disinfectant](#) against Avian influenza in accordance with the manufacturers instructions
- Implement the measures detailed in the avian influenza regulations detailed above.

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