

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza

(01/01) The following further outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry were reported in **Germany** in the second half of December: on 22 December 2023 in a farm with around 12,000 ducks in the Wittmund district (Lower Saxony), on 21 December in a grandparent farm with around 20,000 chickens in the Salzland district (Saxony-Anhalt) and in a farm with around 2,000 turkeys in the Mecklenburg Lake District (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania), on 20 December in a laying hen farm in the Nordfriesland district (Schleswig-Holstein), in a laying hen farm in the Plön district (Schleswig-Holstein) and again in the Oldenburg district (Lower Saxony) in a farm with around 4,000 turkeys. The corresponding exclusion zones have been set up.

On 29 December 2023, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2913 in the EU Official Journal L concerning emergency measures in relation to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States following the recent HPAI outbreaks in **Belgium** (in West Flanders province), **Denmark** (in Holbæk municipality), **Germany** (in Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and North Rhine-Westphalia states), **France** (in Morbihan department) and **Hungary** (in the Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Csongrád-Csanád, Hajdú-Bihar and Komárom-Esztergom counties).

In addition, **Poland** has notified the Commission of outbreaks of HPAI in establishments where poultry were kept, located in West Pomeranian Voivodeship. Moreover, **Belgium** has notified the Commission of an outbreak of HPAI in an establishment where poultry were kept, located in West Flanders province. Furthermore, certain outbreaks confirmed by Hungary are located in close proximity to the border with **Romania** and the surveillances zones extend into the territory of Romania

The annex to the decision contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protective measures.

Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2913, which has now been published, amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2913 is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2023/2913/oj

HPAI: World Organisation for Animal Health publishes statement on vaccination (Annex)

(01/02) The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) published a policy brief on “Avian Influenza vaccination: why it should not be a barrier to safe trade” in December. The WOAH states in this document that the current spread of avian influenza is a major concern for the poultry industry, public health and biodiversity. Given recent developments in its epidemiology, and the increasing circulation of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in wild animals, stricter biosecurity measures and mass culling of poultry may no longer be sufficient to control the disease. With the seasonal north-south migration of wild birds, countries must be prepared for an increase in outbreaks and should consider complementary approaches, such as vaccination, in line with existing international animal health and welfare standards.

That document is in line with the trade principles and the joint position of the IPC (International Poultry Council) and IEC (International Egg Commission) on AI vaccination, by highlighting the key role of poultry genetics and poultry meat trade and how AI vaccination, if implemented properly in accordance with WOAH’s standards, should not pose any risk on international trade of those goods. The document also outline how a vaccination strategy should be designed and which information should be shared with trade partners.

We have attached the WOAH statement on vaccination against avian influenza to this circular.

Amendment to the lists of third countries for imports of poultry commodities from the United Kingdom and the United States

(01/03) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for the United Kingdom and the United States in the lists of third countries authorised for the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat and meat products from poultry and game birds has been amended again in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2886 has been published in the Official Journal L on 22 December 2023.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of 35 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Arkansas (2), California (8), Colorado (1), Kansas (2), Michigan (1), Minnesota (7), North Dakota (1), Ohio (3), South Dakota (5) und Wisconsin (5), which were confirmed between 22 November and 13 December 2023.

With the implementing regulation that has now been published, the EU Commission has suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat of poultry and game birds from those areas mentioned in the United States.

Moreover, the **United Kingdom** has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation on its territory in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in backyard poultry in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, which was confirmed on 23 October 2023.

Furthermore, the, **United States** have has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation on its territory in relation to three outbreaks of HPAI in a poultry establishments in the state of Montana and South Dakota, which were confirmed on 10 and 17 October 2023.

The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by the United Kingdom and the United States. The Commission considers that the United Kingdom and the United States have provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspensions, no longer represents a threat to animal or public health within the Union, and that, consequently, the entry into the Union of poultry commodities from the concerned zones of the United Kingdom and the United States from which entry into the Union had been suspended, should be reauthorised.

Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 were amended accordingly to take account of the current epidemiological situation as regards HPAI in the United Kingdom and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2886 entered into force on 23 December 2023 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2023/2886/oj

Amendment to the lists of third countries for imports of poultry commodities from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States

(01/04) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States in the lists of third countries authorised for the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat and meat products from poultry and game birds has been amended in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2809 has been published in the Official Journal L on 22 December 2023.

Canada has notified the Commission of 12 outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry in the province of Alberta (4), British Columbia (3), Manitoba (1), Quebec (2), and Saskatchewan (2), which were confirmed between 9 November and 5 December 2023.

The **United Kingdom** has notified the Commission of an outbreak of HPAI in poultry in Scotland, on the Orkney Islands, which was confirmed on 22 November 2023.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of six outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Arkansas (1), California (3), New York (1) and South Dakota (1), which were confirmed between 7 and 13 December 2023.

With the implementing regulation that has now been published, the EU Commission has suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry, and fresh meat of poultry and game birds from those areas mentioned in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Moreover, **Canada** has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation on its territory in relation to outbreaks of HPAI in poultry establishments in the provinces of Alberta (1), Quebec (1), and Saskatchewan (2), which were confirmed between 25 and 31 October 2023.

The, **United Kingdom** has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in turkey in Lincolnshire, England, which was confirmed on 9 November 2023. Furthermore, the, **United States** have submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to two outbreaks of HPAI in a poultry establishments in the states of Minnesota and South Dakota, which was confirmed on 3 November and 25 October 2023.

The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by Canada and the United States. The Commission considers that Canada and the United States have provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspensions, no longer represents a threat to animal or public health within the Union, and that, consequently, the entry into the Union of poultry commodities from the concerned zones of Canada and the United States from which entry into the Union had been suspended, should be reauthorised.

Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 were amended accordingly to take account of the current epidemiological situation as regards HPAI in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/2809 entered into force on 23 December 2023 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2023/2809/oj

Annex:

- WOH policy brief on Avian Influenza vaccination

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