

Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (Annex)

(27/01) On 5 July, the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute (FLI) published an updated risk assessment on highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which we have attached to this Newsletter. According to the report, no HPAI outbreaks in domestic poultry were reported in Germany or Europe in June.

In **Germany**, however, the H7N5 subtype was detected in a laying hen flock in northwestern Lower Saxony on 2 July. So far, there is no evidence of further spread of this virus or a potential low-pathogenic precursor. In June, 2 HPAI cases were detected in wild birds in Germany. The risk of HPAI entries (subtype H5) into German domestic poultry farms through direct and indirect contact with wild birds is classified by the FLI as **low**. The risk of the entry, spread and further spread of HPAI H5 viruses in waterfowl populations within Germany is currently estimated to be **moderate**. Across **Europe**, however, cases of HPAI (H5N1) in wild birds have been reported again in Spain, France, Poland and Finland.

With the exception of the USA, only a few outbreaks in domestic poultry and wild bird cases caused by HPAIV H5 clade 2.3.4.4b were detected and reported **worldwide** in June 2024. The further development in dairy cows in the USA is particularly emphasised.

China (Tibet Autonomous Region) reported nearly two hundred dead wild birds in Xizang Province in which HPAI (H5) was found. In Ningbo City on the East China Sea, a wild bird was reported HPAI (H5) positive.

In **southern India** (Kerala) HPAI (H5N1) appears to be spreading. The virus has been detected in poultry.

From **South America**, only Peru reported two outbreaks in domestic poultry (Lambayeque).

North America: In the U.S., 12 outbreaks in poultry (with 0.5 million animal losses) were reported in Minnesota and Iowa in June. In June alone, hundreds of HPAI (H5N1) cases were reported in wild birds in the U.S.. The findings are spread across the entire North American continent. The extent of the spread indicates a high prevalence. The infections of small birds and pigeons in particular appear to be linked to the incidence in dairy cows

By 3 July, the U.S. authorities had reported a total of 137 (36 for June) affected farms from 12 (7 for June) states (Texas, Kansas, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Colorado, Ohio, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wyoming). Recent cases in Colorado far exceed those in any other state, with about a quarter of all farms in the state affected. What exactly makes the spread between cattle farms so successful is not known for certain, direct and indirect transmission routes seem to play a role.

Milk samples from across Canada have been tested for HPAIV H5 with negative results so far.

The FLI has conducted an infection study on the susceptibility of dairy cows to HPAI viruses (H5N1). As a first interim result, not only the U.S. isolate but also a current H5N1 virus from a wild bird from Germany was able to multiply very well in the mammary gland. The infected dairy cows showed clear symptoms of disease.

A Dutch study showed that various HPAI viruses (H5N1) genotypes can also infect the respiratory tract of cattle.

To date, there have been no cases of HPAI viruses (H5N1) in humans or cattle within the EU. This also applies to Germany. Screenings of dairy herds in Germany on the basis of tank milk tests (>450) in various federal states have always yielded negative results. In other European countries, serological studies have been carried out in ruminants, always with negative results.

Even though sporadic human infections continue to occur, according to a current assessment by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the risk of zoonotic influenza transmission to the general population in the EU/EEA countries is classified as **low**. However, a low to moderate risk is assumed for occupationally exposed groups.

On 11 July 2024, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/1948 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 outbreak in **Germany** (in Lower Saxony). The protection and surveillance zones extend into the territory of the Netherlands. The annex to the decision (EU) 2024/1948 contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protective measures.

Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/1948, which has now been published, amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/1948 is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/1948/oj

EFSA/ECDC: Overview of avian influenza March to June 2024

(27/02) On 4 July 2024, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published another quarterly report on avian influenza for the period March to June 2024. According to the report, between 16 March and 14 June 2024, 42 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5) virus detections were reported in domestic (15) and wild (27) birds across 13 countries in **Europe**. Although the overall number of detections in Europe has not been this low since the 2019–2020 epidemiological year, HPAI viruses continue to circulate at a very low level. Most detections in poultry were due to indirect contact with wild birds, but there was also secondary spread.

In poultry flocks, HPAI continues to be concentrated in south-eastern Europe. One cluster is located in Bulgaria, another in Hungary. Germany accounted for 13 outbreaks, all of them in wild birds. After the end of the reporting period, however, there was an HPAI outbreak in Lower Saxony at the beginning of July, as reported. From the beginning of the epidemiological year on 1 October 2023 to the end of the reporting period, 217 detections of the animal disease were documented in Germany: 26 in poultry, 180 in wild birds and 11 in hobby farms. There were 1,001 outbreaks across Europe in the same period. For the epidemiological year 2022/23, 4,205 outbreaks were recorded in wild birds and 1,314 in poultry in Europe. According to the report, most of the detections in poultry flocks were due to indirect contact with wild birds.

The authors attribute the improvement in the situation in Europe to several factors. They cite the immunity developed in some wild birds after surviving infection and the reduction in the size of certain wild bird populations. A change in the composition of viral genotypes is also cited. It is also assumed that the lower number of wild birds dying from the disease has led to reduced contamination of the environment with viruses, which in turn may have fuelled the decline in infections.

Outside Europe, the HPAI situation intensified particularly in the **USA**, where a new A(H5N1) virus genotype (B3.13) has been identified in > 130 dairy herds in 12 states. Infection in cattle appears to be centred on the udder, with milk from infected animals showing high viral loads and representing a new vehicle of transmission. Apart from cattle, HPAI viruses were identified in two other mammal species (alpaca and walrus) for the first time.

Between 13 March and 20 June 2024, 14 new human cases with avian influenza virus infection were reported from Vietnam (one A(H5N1), one A(H9N2)), Australia (with travel history to India, one A(H5N1)), USA (three A(H5N1)), China (two A(H5N6), three A(H9N2), one A(H10N3)), India (one A(H9N2)), and Mexico (one fatal A(H5N2) case). The latter case was the first laboratory-confirmed human infection with avian influenza virus subtype A(H5N2). Most of the human cases had reported exposure to poultry, live poultry markets, or dairy cattle prior to avian influenza virus detection or onset of illness. Human infections with avian influenza viruses remain rare and no human-to-human transmission has been observed. The risk of infection with currently circulating avian A(H5) influenza viruses of clade 2.3.4.4b in Europe remains low for the general public in the EU/EEA. The risk of infection remains low-to-moderate for those occupationally or otherwise exposed to infected animals or contaminated environments.

The full report with extensive graphs and statistics is available at the following link:
[AI Report XXVIX.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

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

(27/03) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for 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) 2024/1893 has been published in the Official Journal L on 5 July 2024.

The **United States** have notified the Commission of three outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Iowa (1) and Minnesota (2), which were confirmed between 21 and 27 June 2024.

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.

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 and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1893 entered into force on 6 July 2024 and is available at the following link: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/1893/oj

Current situation on African swine fever

(27/04) In **Germany**, the African swine fever (ASF) virus was detected for the first time on 8 July in Hesse (Groß-Gerau district) in a small domestic pig population with nine animals. A protection zone will now be set up around the farm in a radius of three kilometres and a surveillance zone of ten kilometres. There are severe restrictions on the trade in pigs and their products. In addition, strict transport restrictions apply. This area also extends to Rhineland-Palatinate. According to initial findings, the ASF has now also reached Rhineland-Palatinate. Two conspicuous wild boars were found at the weekend in Gimbshheim in the district of Alzey-Worms, the Ministry of the Environment in Mainz announced together with the district administration. During an initial examination of the samples at the State Investigation Office, the ASF virus was detected. The National Reference Laboratory for African Swine Fever of the Friedrich Loeffler Institute has confirmed this finding.

On 9 July, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1946 laying down specific control measures for African swine fever (ASF) and amending Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 was published in the Official Journal L. Previously, there have been new outbreaks of African swine fever in wild porcine animals in **Italy** and **Poland**, as well as new outbreaks of African swine fever in kept porcine animals in **Latvia** and **Poland**.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1946 is available at the following link:
http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/1946/oj

EU Commission announces correction of representative prices

(27/05) The last change in the representative prices and the corresponding level of the security took place on 31 May 2024 with Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607. On 31 May 2024, we had informed by email that the figures for chicken breast meat originating in Brazil given by the EU Commission in the annex to this regulation are incorrect according to internal calculations.

At the end of April, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1236 correctly set the representative price at EUR 254,6/100 kg and the security level (additional duty) at EUR 14/100 kg. At the end of May, however, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607 set the level of the security at 0 EUR/100 kg with an unchanged representative price of EUR 254.6/100 kg.

Now the EU Commission has informed EPEGA that no representative price could be calculated for Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607 due to a lack of sufficient imports in the previous months, and the safety level was set at zero. However, due to an error, the box indicating the representative price in the Annex to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607 was not amended. According to the EU Commission, the meaningful element in this context is the **level of security**, which is **correctly set to zero** in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607.

A correction to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1607 will be done. The next modification to Regulation (EU) 1484/95 is planned to be adopted in July. The EU Commission will ensure that such errors are avoided in future publications.

Amendment of specific hygiene rules concern identification marks for export

(27/06) On 19 April, the EU Commission published Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1141 amending specific hygiene rules for certain meat, fishery products, milk products and eggs in the Official Journal. This Regulation amends Annexes II and III of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. The amendments concern the following provisions:

- The identification mark "European Community" is replaced by "European Union";
- Anaesthesia and bleeding of ungulates during slaughter on the farm under certain conditions;
- Temperature conditions and requirements for the transport of meat on collection from different slaughterhouses;
- Harmonisation of certificates of conformity for farmed game, domestic animals of bovine, porcine and equine species from third countries slaughtered at the place of origin;
- Temperature control for the storage of fish products;
- Heat treatment of raw milk;
- foreign odour in eggs.

Of particular interest are the requirements for changing the identification mark in accordance with Article 2 of this Regulation. Accordingly, the abbreviation for "European Community" (EC) previously used in the identification marks must be replaced by the abbreviation for "European Union" (EU) by 31 December 2028 at the latest.

The Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1141 is available at the following link:

http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/1141/oj

Moving chairs in the EU Agriculture and Environment Committees

(27/08) The days of CDU (German Christian Democratic Union) politician Norbert Lins as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee in the European Parliament are probably numbered. The right to make proposals for this Committee should go to the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group. An as yet unnamed representative of the post-fascist Fratelli d'Italia (FdI), the party of Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, is being discussed. However, this is not yet certain. There are rumours from the European People's Party (EPP), to which Lins belongs, that a swap with the right to propose another Committee Chair at the level of the group chairmen is still possible, at least theoretically. In addition, rumours of an expansion of the portfolio of the Agriculture Committee have probably been shattered for the time being.

Progress is apparently also being made with the future Environment Committee. Contrary to what was heard last week, there will be no reorganisation of the Committee's responsibilities. It had been discussed

that, among other things, the areas of plant protection and animal health could be spun off into a new Health Committee. According to the current status, the Environment Committee is now to keep its previous portfolio in full. This time, the right of nomination for the Presidency is to lie with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D). This would mean that the previous Chairman of the liberal Renew Europe (RE) group, Pascal Canfin, would have to leave his post.

The number of Members of the European Parliament who will sit on the specialised Committees should be determined in the near future, at least provisionally. This means that the individual politicians will soon know which specialised Committees they will be able to sit on. The final decision on the entire package will be taken in Plenary on 16 July in Strasbourg.

France: Meat consumption declining, but poultry increasingly popular

(27/09) In France, meat consumption fell slightly last year. According to the latest figures from the Statistical Service of the French Ministry of Agriculture (Agreste), in 2023 the consumption of meat including poultry including processed and frozen sausage products without offal amounted to 5.7 million tonnes of slaughter weight. This was a year-on-year decrease of 1.4%. Total consumption of slaughtered meat, which accounts for two-thirds of total meat consumption, fell by 3.7% compared to 2022 to around 3.7 million tonnes of slaughter weight, especially in the pig, beef and sheep sectors. According to the statisticians, this decline should also be seen against the background of inflation. The consumption of pork, the largest meat product in terms of volume, reached 2.1 million tonnes of slaughter weight, the lowest level in 20 years. The average per capita meat consumption decreased by 1.7% year-on-year to 83.5 kilograms.

Poultry meat enjoyed increasing popularity. According to Agreste, consumption rose by 3.5% last year to just under 2.0 million tonnes of slaughter weight. The experts attribute this increase to a dynamic consumption of chicken meat and the recovery of the duck industry after avian influenza.

According to Agreste figures, meat imports fell at the same rate as total consumption, by 2.1% to just under 2.0 million tonnes of slaughter weight. However, imports still remained at a "high level". On average, they accounted for more than 30% of total meat consumption and at least half of the consumption of sheep and chicken.

Annex:

- FLI - Risk assessment HPAI, 5 July 2024

Imprint

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