

Current situation on highly pathogenic avian influenza

(36/01) The total number of outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Europe remained at a relatively low level in August with 41 reports, despite a slight increase compared to previous months, according to a recent report by the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI). With the exception of the reported cases from France (H5, N not typed), all reports were of the H5N1 subtype. In **Germany**, outbreaks in domestic poultry and detections in wild birds only occurred near the coast. At the beginning of August, two HPAI outbreaks (subtype H5N1) were confirmed in mixed holdings in the district of Rostock, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Further outbreaks in poultry holdings in Europe were reported in August from north-east **France** (Brittany, 2) and eastern **Poland** (Lubuskie, 1). The total number of HPAI outbreaks in poultry farms thus increased to five reports compared to the previous month (1).

According to the FLI, the HPAI situation in the **United States** remains dynamic. Further cases of H5N1 have been confirmed in dairy cows. In the meantime, there have also been detections on dairy farms in California, whereby an entry via animal transport is assumed. The H5N1 virus, which is causing outbreaks in cows in the USA, harbours several mutations that are associated with increased virulence or adaptation to mammals. In the state of Missouri, another human has recently been infected with the avian influenza virus. This brings the total number of people infected to 14. The latest case is unusual, however, as it is not yet clear how the person became infected, according to the US health authority CDC. In contrast to the previous cases, the man is said to have had no contact with infected animals. All other affected persons had close contact with sick or dead poultry before becoming ill. 'People probably have to ingest very large quantities of the virus to become infected,' explains the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). However, it is also possible that the virus continues to change and adapt in mammals. In this case, human-to-human transmission must also be considered, the CDC adds. This is now being investigated further. According to current knowledge, there is no ongoing human-to-human transmission. The CDC therefore estimates the risk to the population to be low.

In **Europe**, no mutations have yet been identified that allow the virus to adapt from avian to human-like receptors. Outside the United States, there is no evidence of similar incidents of infection with HPAI H5N1 in any other country in the world. Nevertheless, increased vigilance is recommended, and in particular in the case of unclear and frequent cases of disease in dairy cow herds, HPAI H5N1 should also be considered during the investigation.

Despite sporadic transmission to humans, the WHO's risk assessment remains unchanged - the risk of transmission to humans is still considered to be low to moderate. Experts from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) continue to recommend that surveillance of wild and captive mammals should be continued.

Current situation on African swine fever

(36/02) In August, the number of cases of African swine fever (ASF) in wild boar in Europe fell slightly compared to previous months, according to the latest report from the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI). In **Germany**, however, the number of ASF cases continued to rise, which is also linked to the newly affected areas. Following a case in Baden-Württemberg in July, a further 48 cases were detected in Hesse and 24 cases in Rhineland-Palatinate in August. However, the number of cases in the long-infected areas in eastern Germany also rose significantly again to a total of 50 (previous month: 17) with 46 cases in Brandenburg and four in Saxony. **Poland** with 227 cases, **Latvia** with 120 and **Lithuania** with 58 cases also recorded high case numbers again. In **Italy**, the number of cases continued to fall significantly to just 32.

According to the FLI, the number of ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs fell significantly in August compared to the previous month, although late reports are still to be expected in some cases. In **Germany**, there was only one further outbreak of ASF during the reporting period in a small holding in the Bad Dürkheim district of Rhineland-Palatinate, around 20 kilometres south-west of the nearest detection (in wild boar) in the region. In **Serbia**, the number of outbreaks more than doubled from June to July to 120 outbreaks following substantial additional reports for July. In the reporting period and at the current data status, Serbia also has the most reports with 33 outbreaks, followed by **Romania** (26), **Italy** (16), **Ukraine** (14) and **Poland** (11). The number of outbreaks in Italy has also more than doubled compared to the previous month, although these remain limited to the north.

Outside Europe, there were again numerous outbreaks of ASF in domestic pig holdings in August, particularly in Vietnam (43). Further outbreaks were reported in Indonesia (3), South Korea (1) and the Russian Federation (1).

On 10 September, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2425 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 the **Greece**, as well as new outbreaks of African swine fever in kept porcine animals in **Italy** and **Poland**.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2425 is available at the following link:

http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/2425/oj

Deforestation-free supply chains - Compound feed manufacturers in the EU fear soya shortages

(36/05) The EU regulation on deforestation-free supply chains (EUDR) will come into force next year and the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC) fears that this will lead to supply bottlenecks for soya meal. According to the latest results of a member survey, the annual demand of around 30 million tonnes of soya meal could no longer be fully covered by purchases from third countries once the EUDR comes into force. Compound feed producers in the EU fear a market shortfall of up to 10%. The additional costs for soya meal that complies with the EUDR regulations are estimated at 5% to 10%, which corresponds to additional costs of 750 million to 1.5 billion euros per year. For some time now, several member states and various branches of industry have been pushing for a postponement of at least one year, especially as there is a risk of an import ban in the event of non-compliance.

FEFAC has therefore carried out an initial qualitative assessment of the risk of disruption to the EU feed supply chain for soya supplies for the first and second quarters of 2025. According to the assessment, there is a low to medium risk of disruptions in the supply of soya from the USA and Canada. Soya from Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay is categorised as medium risk. According to the FEFAC, there is a medium to high risk for Serbian, Ukrainian or EU sources. High risks of supply chain disruptions are expected for soya from Nigeria, India and China. According to the EU Commission, the benchmarking system, i.e. the risk classification of countries, has not yet been finalised. In addition to third countries, all EU states must also be categorised in three categories with 'low, medium or high risk'.

Due to its high content of essential amino acids, soya extraction meal plays an important role in the diet of pigs and poultry, for example, and especially in the feeding of high-yielding dairy cows.

Audit Report Japan

(36/07) This report describes the outcome of an audit of Japan, carried out from 15 to 22 November 2023 as part of Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety work programme. Japan is on the lists of third countries from which the entry into the European Union (EU) of fresh poultry meat, poultry meat products, eggs, and egg products, is permitted. Since 5 November 2020, that authorisation is suspended because of restrictions imposed in response to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) that happened in successive epizootic waves, the most recent beginning just after the finalisation of this audit. The EU and Japan are in the final steps of negotiating a bilateral agreement on the application of zoning principles to facilitate continuation of trade of poultry commodities in the event of outbreaks of HPAI. Thus, the objective of this audit was to verify if Japan's measures to control the disease, notably when free zones are established in response to those outbreaks, can provide guarantees at least equivalent to EU provisions and fulfil animal health certification requirements for entry into the EU of those commodities. The main conclusions of this audit are that:

1. The Japanese competent authorities can provide adequate certification guarantees on the registration of poultry farms, and on animal and products traceability, which also allow them to apply HPAI surveillance and control measures effectively.
2. There are adequate official controls on poultry farms, which the authorities apply regularly to verify the effectiveness of preventive measures to reduce the risk of introduction of infection with HPAI, and the capability of operators to contribute to early detection of the disease.
3. Surveillance for early detection of HPAI relies on timely notification and the appropriate official investigation of situations when there is reason to suspect the presence of the disease, both in poultry and in wild birds. That underpins the deployment of a rapid response to prevent its further spread, and to eliminate the infection from affected poultry farms.
4. The design and implementation of active surveillance for HPAI follows international standards and complements well other components of surveillance for the disease. Although its implementation has provided historically limited support to early detection of HPAI, it reinforces the credibility of the country's free disease status, when applicable.
5. The network of designated official laboratories, coordinated by a national reference laboratory for HPAI (NRL), provides adequate support to the implementation of surveillance and eradication measures for the disease. Nevertheless, the reliability of their testing results is still impaired by certain persistent shortcomings in the quality assurance system applied in the NRL and to verify the diagnostic activities of the rest of the laboratory network.
6. The measures taken, and the restrictions imposed upon suspicion and confirmation of HPAI on poultry farms and surrounding areas, including derogations thereto, are applied quickly and effectively. While applied, they contribute to prevent the risk of transmission of the disease to other farms and outside of restricted areas, including to the EU.
7. Each HPAI epizootic is analysed comprehensively, and the authorities usually act upon some of the lessons learnt to improve their level of emergency preparedness. However, they apply certain disease control measures differently to the EU. Some of them are less effective, may facilitate the local spread of the disease, and delay its eradication, as it is the case when the authorities do not collect samples and investigate the possible presence of the HPAI virus in farms within protection (movement restriction) zones and in those epidemiologically linked to previous outbreaks, and when they do not make proper use of further restricted zones.
8. The Japanese authorities cover restricted zones only partially with post-outbreak active surveillance, which they carry out only for limited time. Thus, they cannot obtain adequate epidemiological evidence to ensure the absence of HPAI virus circulation, which is a fundamental requisite for those zones to regain convincingly their disease-free status in accordance with EU requirements and with standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

9. The lifting of disease control measures in restricted zones within shorter deadlines than those required by EU provisions and standards of the WOAAH to recover the free HPAI status, increases the risk of transmitting the disease to, and compromises the free HPAI status of the rest of the territory of Japan. Thus, this shortcoming undermines the reliability of the modality used by Japan to apply zoning to ensure safe trade for poultry commodities from the assumed disease-free areas during sustained HPAI outbreaks.
10. The Japanese authorities have proved before that they can set up an official export certification system that can provide the required animal health guarantees for exports to the EU of poultry commodities. However, insufficient understanding of some new EU import requirements, and the shortcomings related to zoning mentioned in previous points, still preclude that certifying officers are able to verify the pre-certification evidence necessary to sign the new models of EU certificates for those commodities.

The Japanese competent authorities acknowledged their understanding of the EU position on how application by Japan of a zoning policy in response to outbreaks of HPAI should align with principles and standards laid down in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the World Organisation for Animal Health, and undertook to reflect on that.

The report contains recommendations to the competent authority to address the shortcomings identified. It is available at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report/details/4793>

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