

Current information on highly pathogenic avian influenza (Annex)

(49/01) In November 2024, 6 HPAIV H5N1 outbreaks in poultry were detected in **Germany** and 28 wild bird cases were reported. The outbreaks in poultry were as follows: On 20 November, one case was detected in **Bavaria** in the district of Coburg in a private holding with 20 geese and ducks. Also on 20 November, a turkey fattening farm with 15,900 animals was affected in the district of Kleve in **North Rhine-Westphalia**. On 23 November, a case was detected in **Schleswig-Holstein** in the district of Nordfriesland on a farm with 9,900 animals producing chicken eggs. On 24 November, a case was detected in a turkey farm with 8,400 birds in the district of Aurich in **Lower Saxony**. On 26 November, a case was reported in **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** in the district of Rostock in a fattening farm for ducks and geese with 13,300 birds. On 29 November, an outbreak was detected in a turkey fattening farm with 28,600 birds in the district of Friesland in **Lower Saxony**.

On 6 December, a case was reported on a farm with 5,500 turkeys in the district of Cloppenburg in **Lower Saxony**. On the same day, in **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** in the district of Ludwigslust-Parchim, a case was detected on a farm with 17,500 turkeys.

The situation in **Europe** in November was as follows: While the number of HPAIV H5 outbreaks in poultry or kept birds in Europe was low up to and including September, a total of 149 outbreaks in poultry and 33 cases in kept birds were reported in November. Hungary's waterfowl farms are particularly affected. Norway and the United Kingdom each had one outbreak with the H5N5 subtype.

In the **Netherlands**, avian influenza was detected in a broiler farm in Blija (municipality of Noardeast-Fryslân, province of Friesland) on 8 December. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, the more than 63,000 animals at the site were culled by the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA). This is the second bird flu infection on a poultry farm in the Netherlands this year.

In November, outbreaks of HPAIV H5 in poultry were reported in **Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Canada** and the **USA**. Cases of HPAIV H5 in wild birds have been reported in **South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong SAR** and **South Korea**. Cases of HPAIV H5 in mammals have mainly affected dairy farms in the USA, where 69 newly infected H5N1-positive dairy farms were found during the reporting period, and California continues to be particularly affected. Further information can be found in the attached FLI risk assessment of 6 December.

On 9 December 2024, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/3039 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 the **Czech Republic** (districts of Brno-Land, Klatovy and Jungbunzlau), **Germany** (federal states of Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein), **France** (Landes department), **Italy** (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lombardy and Veneto regions), **Hungary** (Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád-Csanád, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Somogy), the **Netherlands** (Province of Gelderland), **Poland** (Voivodeships of Lower Silesia, Lublin, Mazovia, Opole, Silesia and Greater Poland) and **Romania** (Timiș County). The annex to the decision contains the updated territorial outlines of the protection and surveillance zones as well as the provisional duration of the protection measures.

Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/3039 amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2024/3039 is available at the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024D3039>

Third country lists for the import of poultry products from Canada and the USA amended

(49/02) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for Canada and the USA in the lists of third countries from which entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry and fresh meat and meat products of poultry and wild feathered game is authorised have been amended again in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/3108 was published in the Official Journal L on 9 December 2024.

Canada has notified the Commission of three outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry in the provinces of Alberta (2) and British Columbia (1) that were confirmed by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR) between 12 November 2024 and 14 November 2024.

The United States has notified the Commission of 18 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Arizona (1), Illinois (1), California (14) and Utah (2) that were confirmed by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR) between 13 November 2024 and 21 November 2024. With the above-mentioned Implementing Regulation, the EU Commission has suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry and fresh meat of poultry and wild feathered game from the above-mentioned territories in Canada and the United States.

Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 have been amended accordingly to take into account the current disease situation with regard to HPAI in Canada and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/3108 enters into force on 10 December and is available at the following link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R3108>

Third country lists for imports of poultry products from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States amended

(49/03) 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 from which entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry and fresh meat and meat products of poultry and wild feathered game is authorised have been amended again in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The corresponding Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/3141 was published in the Official Journal L on 12 December 2024.

Canada has notified the Commission of three outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry in the provinces of British Columbia (2) and Manitoba (1), which were confirmed on 21 November 2024 and 27 November 2024, respectively, by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR).

The United Kingdom has notified the Commission of an outbreak of HPAI in poultry in the county of Norfolk, England, which was confirmed on 5 December 2024 by laboratory analysis (RT-P+CR).

The United States has notified the Commission of 27 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of California (14), Minnesota (3), North Dakota (3), South Dakota (5), Tennessee (1) and Utah (1), which were confirmed between 22 November 2024 and 5 December 2024 by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR). With the above-mentioned Implementing Regulation, the EU Commission has suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry and fresh meat of poultry and wild feathered game from the above-mentioned territories in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In addition, Canada and the United States have provided updated information to the Commission in relation to the epidemiological situation on their territories as regards HPAI that gave rise to the suspension

of the entry into the Union of certain products, as set out in Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404.

Canada has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in the province of **Saskatchewan**, which was confirmed on **29 October 2024** by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR).

The United States has submitted updated information on the epidemiological situation in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in poultry in the state of **Utah**, which was confirmed on **15 October 2024** by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR).

The Commission has evaluated the information submitted by Canada and the United States, and considers that they have provided appropriate guarantees that the animal health situation that gave rise to the suspension of the entry of consignments of certain products into the Union from the concerned zones, as set out in Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404, no longer represents a threat to animal or public health within the Union, and that, consequently, the entry into the Union of those consignments 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 have been amended accordingly to take into account the current epidemiological situation with regard to HPAI in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/3141 enters into force on 13 December and is available at the following link: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202403141

Update Mercosur Agreement (Annex)

(49/04) On the margins of the Mercosur Summit on 5 and 6 December 2024, a political agreement was reached between the European Union and the Mercosur states on the long-negotiated Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. With this agreement, the EU and the Mercosur states want to expand their partnership. In particular, it is planned to largely reduce customs duties between the two trading regions. The effects of the Mercosur agreement were already reported on at the EPEGA General Assembly on 24 November 2023. At that time, Marcus Schwenke, who heads the Foreign Trade Policy, Import Promotion & Development Cooperation Department at the EPEGA umbrella organisation Bundesverband Großhandel, Außenhandel, Dienstleistungen (BGA), gave the attached presentation (see slides 9-11 in particular). This shows that

under the Mercosur agreement, imports of 180,000 tonnes of carcass equivalent (CWE) will be duty-free, divided into 50% bone-in and 50% boneless. The quantity is to be imported in six equal annual steps.

The additional quotas account for 1.2% of EU consumption. The EU produced 15.2 million tonnes of poultry meat (2018). The EU already imported 800,000 tonnes of poultry products in 2018, half of which came from Mercosur. At the same time, 800,000 tonnes were exported.

Further procedural steps are required before the agreement can be signed and enter into force. As it contains agreements on political dialogue and cooperation in addition to trade arrangements, it should actually be submitted to all member states for ratification. France and Italy are against the agreement, and there is also resistance in Austria and Poland. However, the EU Commission, which is responsible for the negotiations, could try to split the political part from the trade part. The trade part could then be adopted by the Council of the EU member states by majority vote and would only have to be submitted to the European Parliament for approval.

Following the conclusion of the negotiations, the negotiated text still has to undergo a legal review and be translated into all the languages of the signatory states. It is therefore not expected to be signed until the second half of next year.

Detailed information on the agreement can be found on the following page:

https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mercosur/eu-mercosur-agreement_en

Current situation on African swine fever

(49/05) According to the TierSeuchenInformationssystem (TSIS, <https://tsis.fli.de/cadenza/>) of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Friedrich Löffler Institute (FLI), the total number of confirmed cases of African swine fever (ASF) in **Germany** is 6,453 (as at 10 December 2024). So far in 2024, 808 cases have been detected in wild animals and 11 cases in kept animals.

In Hesse, the current incidence of infection in Germany is concentrated in the Bergstrasse and Groß-Gerau districts. In Rhineland-Palatinate, there were two new cases on 29/11/2024 and 3/12/2024. In Brandenburg, the most recent case was detected in wild boar on 9 December 2024.

In **Europe**, **Poland** (1,918), **Italy** (1,197), **Latvia** and **Lithuania** (821 and 520) as well as **Hungary**, **Serbia** and **Romania** (357, 385 and 341) are currently reporting the highest outbreak figures in 2024. The EU Commission's map, last updated on 27 November 2024, with the currently applicable restricted zones I, II and III can be accessed here: https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a794443e-4d25-408d-a759-2143c5914807_en?filename=ad_cm_asf_zoning_map_post-20210421_0.pdf

WTO Directorate-General - Agricultural trade has top priority

(49/06) The re-elected Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has declared the goal of more open agricultural trade to be one of the top priorities in her second term of office. Her deputy Jean-Marie Paugam pointed this out on 9 December and at the same time emphasised the important role of open trade for global food and nutrition security. 'The first and most important contribution of trade to food security is security of supply,' said Paugam.

Many people would be at risk of starvation if the international food trade failed. According to Paugam, a quarter of global food production is currently traded internationally and the value of this exchange of goods has reached \$2,300 billion (2,185 billion euros). The Frenchman also referred to the improvement in food diversity brought about by trade. In 2010, the variety of products available for consumption worldwide was around 60% greater than those produced domestically. By 2020, this figure had risen to almost 90%.

At the same time, the complexity and interconnectedness of global food supply chains have also increased, said Paugam. Processed food is the fastest growing sector in global agricultural trade. According to FAO figures, a third of global food and agricultural supplies now cross borders at least twice. There is therefore a need to use trade policy to protect this interdependence in the interests of food security.

According to Paugam, progress must first be made in the ongoing WTO agricultural negotiations. Trade barriers such as high agricultural tariffs, highly trade-distorting subsidies and the environmental problems exacerbated by current agricultural practices must be tackled. The WTO must help to reduce or completely abolish these negative incentives through agricultural reform. Certain measures, such as public food stockpiling programmes, should be taken into account as they contribute to food security, the WTO Deputy Director-General qualified.

EFSA: Fences can help combat ASF

(49/07) Fences, in combination with culling, carcass removal and the existing road infrastructure, can contribute to the control of African swine fever (ASF) in feral pigs. This is the conclusion drawn by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in a recent report. However, the success of the measures depends on timely implementation, adaptation to changing epidemiological situations and regular maintenance.

In its assessment of the effectiveness of fences, the EFSA drew on information from ten Member States, including Germany. Scientific work on barriers was also consulted, such as roads, wire mesh fences and natural barriers such as rivers. These indicate, for example, that wild boars always use motorway crossings when they are available. According to the EFSA, the temporary closure of motorway crossings could therefore be an effective instrument to prevent the migration of wild boar.

Studies in Italy show that main roads and urban areas are the most important barriers to gene flow between subpopulations of wild boar. This obviously also applies to large rivers. Work on the wild boar population in Rhineland-Palatinate shows that the Moselle, with a width of 40 metres and an average discharge of 313 cubic metres, is not sufficient, as no genetic differences were found between the populations on either side. In contrast, the Rhine, with a width of 150 to 250 metres and an average discharge of around 2,000 cubic metres, represents an effective barrier.

Along the Hungarian-Croatian border fence, there were no crossings by wild animals, including wild boar, as the EFSA also found. In contrast, several crossings by wild boar were recorded at the 170 kilometre-long barbed wire fence on the Slovenian-Croatian border during the ten-month observation period, but no mortality of this species, unlike red deer.

In Australia, studies have shown that exclusion fences, which consist of tight wire mesh with several strands of barbed wire near the base of the fence, can prevent wild boar damage in wetlands. Similar results were obtained in a study of such fences in New Zealand, where they successfully prevented the spread and reinvasion of wild boar in an area. A local wild boar eradication programme was carried out there. In summary, according to EFSA, these studies show that appropriate fencing, if well maintained, is effective in controlling wild boar movements and reducing crop damage and road deaths.

With regard to the impact of wild boar population density, EFSA states that the analysis has not identified a clear and consistent effect on ASF incidence. Other factors such as habitat, climate and potential barriers also play a role in the spread of the virus, but additional data is needed for a comprehensive understanding. With this in mind, the Authority is calling on European Union Member States to collect and report field data, including the date and exact location of both positive and negative wild boar.

The report can be accessed here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/9095>

Annex:

- FLI risk assessment HPAI H5 from 6 December 2024
- Presentation Mercosur negotiations

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