

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

(02/01) On 13 January 2025, the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI) published an updated risk assessment on highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), which we have attached to this circular. According to this assessment, the FLI continues to estimate the risk of HPAI H5 viruses entering, spreading and spreading further in waterfowl populations within Germany as high. The risk of HPAIV H5 entering German poultry farms and bird populations in zoological facilities through direct and indirect contact with wild birds is classified as high.

The FLI currently assumes a moderate risk of introduction through the spread of the virus between holdings (secondary outbreaks) within the EU and also within Germany. The risk of introduction through the sale of live poultry in the travelling trade or at poultry exhibitions within Germany and Europe is estimated to be moderate. The risk of unrecognised circulation of HPAI H5 viruses in waterfowl holdings is classified as moderate.

In Germany, the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus was detected on 14 January 2025 in a turkey fattening farm with around 11,200 turkey cockerels in the municipality of Hude in the district of Oldenburg. On the same day, an outbreak of H5N1 AI was also confirmed in Baden-Württemberg in a turkey fattening farm with 50,000 animals near Ilshofen in the district of Schwäbisch Hall. The corresponding restricted zones were established and the animals were ordered to be culled.

In the USA, an outbreak of HPAI was confirmed on 7 January 2025 in North Carolina on a farm with 3,314,900 laying hens. On 8 January 2025, another outbreak was confirmed in Ohio. Here, 245,300 laying hens were affected. On 14 January 2025, an outbreak was confirmed in Missouri, affecting 1,585,100 laying hens.

EPEGA also received information on the following HPAI outbreaks last week: In France, two outbreaks of HPAI (H5N1) were reported in the north-west of the country on farms with guinea fowl. The first outbreak occurred in Eure, department 27, on a multi-species farm, the second in department 14 (Calvados). There is an epidemiological link between the outbreaks. In Hungary, an HPAI (H5N1) outbreak was reported on a farm with ducks in the northern part of the country. Poland has reported 2 outbreaks of HPAI (H5N1) on farms with broiler chicks in the northern part of the country. Portugal has reported an outbreak of HPAI (H5N1) in a holding in Sao Joao Das Lampas / Lisbon district. No further details on the species of the birds have been provided. This is the first HPAI outbreak in Portugal since September 2022. The United Kingdom has reported an outbreak of HPAI (H5N1) on a farm with broiler breeder chicks in Nafferton, East Riding of Yorkshire. Six outbreaks of HPAI (H5N1) have been reported in Canada, two HPAI outbreaks in British Columbia and four in Ontario. In British Columbia, farms with broilers and ducks were affected, in Ontario farms with turkeys. Israel has reported three HPAI (H5N1) outbreaks on farms in the north-western part of the country. One farm with breeding chicks and two farms with turkeys were affected. South Korea has reported nine outbreaks of HPAI (H5N1) in the north-west and south-west of the country without details of the species of birds.

On 17 January 2025, the European Commission published Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/84 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 Germany (Bavaria), France (Normandy region), Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Lombardia and Veneto regions), Hungary (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county), Poland (Śląskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeships) and Portugal (Lisbon district). 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)

2025/84 amends Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2447 accordingly. Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/84 is available at the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32025D0084>

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

(02/02) Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 as regards the entries for Canada, the United Kingdom 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) 2025/80 was published in the Official Journal L on 15 January 2025.

Canada has notified the Commission of four outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry in the province of Ontario that were confirmed by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR) between 14 December 2024 and 20 December 2024.

The United Kingdom has notified the Commission of four outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the county of Norfolk, England, which were confirmed by laboratory testing (RT-PCR) on 17 December 2024 and 24 December 2024 respectively.

The United States has notified the Commission of 38 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the states of Alabama (1), California (11), Illinois (2), Iowa (4), Kansas (2), Michigan (2), Minnesota (3), Mississippi (1), Missouri (1), Nebraska (1), Ohio (2), Oklahoma (2), South Dakota (4) and Wisconsin (2) that occurred between 12 December 2024 and 27 December 2024. December 2024 and 27 December 2024 were confirmed by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR).

With the Implementing Regulation published on 15 January 2025, the EU Commission suspended the entry into the Union of consignments of poultry, germinal products of poultry and fresh meat of poultry and farmed feathered game from the above-mentioned areas in the United Kingdom and the United States.

In addition, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States have provided the Commission with updated information on the disease situation with regard to HPAI in their territories, which gave rise to the suspension of 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 disease situation in relation to an outbreak of HPAI in the province of Alberta confirmed by laboratory analysis (RT-PCR) on 14 November 2024.

The United Kingdom has provided updated information on the disease situation in relation to two outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the counties of Yorkshire and Cornwall, England, confirmed on 5 November 2024 and 17 November 2024 respectively.

The United States has submitted updated information on the disease situation in relation to seven outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the States of California and Washington that were confirmed by laboratory testing (RT-PCR) between 15 October 2024 and 14 November 2024.

The Commission has assessed the information submitted by Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States and considers that it has provided reasonable guarantees that the animal health situation that led to the suspension of the entry into the Union of consignments of certain products from the affected zones, as set out in Annexes V and XIV to Implementing Regulation (EU)

2021/404, does not present a risk to public health or animal health, no longer poses a risk to public or animal health in the Union and that, consequently, entry into the Union of those consignments from the affected zones of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States from which entry into the Union has been suspended should be authorised again.

Annexes V and XIV of 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) 2025/80 entered into force on 16 January 2025 and is available at the following link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32025R0080>

### **CDU/CSU wants to abolish animal husbandry labelling law**

(02/03) If the CDU/CSU assumes government responsibility after the Bundestag elections, it intends to campaign for the abolition of the Animal Husbandry Labelling Act. The reason for this is that the law puts German companies at a considerable competitive disadvantage, as Christina Stumpp, Deputy Secretary General of the CDU, explained to journalists in Berlin on 15 January 2025. A state label would be superfluous, as the private-sector labelling scheme 'Haltungsform.de' offers a proven alternative.

Sven Schulz, Minister of Agriculture in Saxony-Anhalt, also referred to unacceptable shortcomings in the law. The Bundesrat had pointed these out, but they had not been rectified. 'The Animal Husbandry Labelling Act is poorly crafted,' said the chairman of the CDU and CSU state agriculture ministers. He is convinced that a state livestock labelling scheme must be embedded in an overall concept for the further development of animal husbandry if it is to do more for farms than create additional bureaucracy. This would include changes to building and immission control legislation as well as a twenty-year authorisation guarantee for stable constructions.

Steffen Bilger, deputy chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag, confirmed the Union's commitment to implementing the Borchert concept, but conceded that questions regarding financing still need to be clarified. Against the background of high inflation, Bilger sees little chance of financing via VAT. Financing via the federal budget is more conceivable.

### **Current situation regarding foot-and-mouth disease**

(02/04) On 10 January 2025, there was a confirmed case of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) for the first time since 1988. The infection was detected and confirmed by the National Reference Laboratory of the Friedrich Löffler Institute in water buffaloes kept in Brandenburg.

Another suspected case of foot-and-mouth disease in the Barnim district that became known on 16 January 2020 has not been confirmed, according to Federal Minister of Agriculture Cem Özdemir. A ban on animal transport in Brandenburg has been issued due to the uncertain situation following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and applies up to and including 17 January 2025 for cloven-hoofed animals for which the disease is highly contagious.

The German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture has provided information on the effects of the FMD outbreak, stating that the regionalisation principle applies within the EU. In an implementing decision, the European Commission confirmed the 3 and 10-kilometre zones already established by Brandenburg and thus created the basis for regionalisation. The Commission has not enlarged the area restricted

by Brandenburg. Animal products produced outside the restricted zone can therefore continue to be traded in the EU.

With the confirmation of FMD, Germany has lost its status as ‘free from FMD without vaccination’ with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Veterinary certificates for export to third countries, which explicitly state that Germany is free of FMD, can therefore not be issued at present.

### **Animal welfare initiative is well known**

(02/05) The vast majority of Germans are familiar with the Animal Welfare Initiative (ITW). According to a recent survey conducted by the market research institute Forsa on behalf of the ITW, 71% of consumers have heard or read about the ITW. This figure has risen by 30 percentage points over the past seven years. At the same time, 85% of respondents think the concept behind it is good or very good. The five-stage farming method labelling is also well known: 80% have consciously noticed the ‘farming method’ label on the packaging of meat products. Furthermore, 74% of those surveyed believe that this labelling will have a positive influence on purchasing behaviour in the long term and that the issue of animal welfare will play a greater role in purchasing decisions.

ITW Managing Director Robert Römer sees the figures as confirmation of the path taken: ‘The high level of awareness and broad support for the animal welfare initiative and the husbandry form labelling make it clear that we as an industry are making an important contribution to transparency on the subject of animal welfare,’ explained Römer on 16 January in the run-up to the Green Week in Berlin. The labelling could enable people to make a conscious decision in favour of more animal-friendly products.

According to the Forsa survey, 63% of consumers believe that they are primarily responsible for improving animal welfare. 71% are of the opinion that they bear the primary burden for animal welfare. Only 32% see this as a task for the state.

The Animal Welfare Initiative was launched in 2015 as a support programme for animal welfare. With this programme, the partners from agriculture, the meat industry, the food trade and the catering industry acknowledge their joint responsibility for animal husbandry, animal health and animal welfare in livestock farming. The Animal Welfare Initiative supports farmers financially in implementing measures for the welfare of their livestock that go beyond the legal standards. The implementation of these measures is monitored across the board by the Animal Welfare Initiative. The product seal of the Animal Welfare Initiative only recognises products that come from animals from participating farms in the Animal Welfare Initiative. The Animal Welfare Initiative is gradually establishing greater animal welfare on a broad scale and is being continuously developed. Around 600 million pigs, chickens and turkeys are currently benefiting from this.

### **Annex:**

- FLI - HPAI risk assessment, as of 13 January 2025

**Imprint**

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