

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) identified in Suffolk

Low pathogenic avian flu of the H5 strain has been confirmed at a commercial chicken farm in Mid Suffolk, today on Tuesday 10th December.

All the birds will now be humanely culled and we have put in place a [1km restriction zone](#) around the infected farm to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

The advice from Public Health England (PHE) is that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency has made clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. Thoroughly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

Chief Veterinary Officer, Christine Middlemiss, said:

Low Pathogenic Avian flu has been confirmed on a commercial chicken farm in Suffolk. Immediate steps have been taken to limit the risk of the disease spreading and 27,000 poultry at the farm will be culled.

Public Health England has confirmed that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Bird keepers should remain alert for any signs of disease, report suspected disease immediately and ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises.

We are urgently looking for any evidence of disease spread associated with this strain to control and eliminate it.

Dr Gavin Dabrera, Public Health Consultant, Public Health England, said:

Avian flu (often called bird flu) is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low.

As a precaution, we are offering public health advice and antivirals to those who had contact with the affected birds, as is standard practice.

A detailed investigation is in progress to determine the most likely source of this outbreak.

Notes to editors

- Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) is a less serious strain of H5 avian influenza. It can cause mild breathing problems, but affected birds will not always show clear signs of infection. The last confirmed case of LPAI in the UK was in Dunfermline in January 2016.
- The restrictions in place mean that all premises with poultry and/or captive birds within the zones will span 1km.
- The movement of birds, eggs and other things such as carcasses on or off premises where poultry is present and out of the zones are banned except under licence. No gatherings of poultry or the release of game birds are also allowed in the zones. Information on the restriction measures in place within the zones can be found [on our bird flu page](#)
- The Food Standard Agency's information dictates that on the basis of current scientific evidence, its advice is that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers and the risk of getting bird flu through the food chain is very low. Thoroughly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.
- Since June 2017, there have been no detections of avian influenza in poultry or kept birds in the UK. The UK has retained its OIE country freedom status since September 2017.
- Bird flu is a notifiable animal disease. If type of bird flu in poultry is suspected keepers must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Wales, contact 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, they should contact their local Field Services Office. Failure to do so is an offence.
- If the public find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, they should report them to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).
- Clinical signs that poultry keepers should look for in their birds include a swollen head, discolouration of neck and throat, loss of appetite, respiratory distress, diarrhoea and fewer eggs laid – although clinical signs vary between [species of bird](#)
- Where avian influenza (or Newcastle Disease) is not strongly suspected, but cannot be ruled out, poultry keepers may wish to liaise with their private veterinarian about utilising the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) 'testing for exclusion' regime in GB. This involves submitting

samples to a testing service at the APHA's National Reference Laboratory, Weybridge and can help detect a notifiable avian disease at the earliest opportunity for such cases. [Further information can be found on our bird flu page](#)

- Further information on biosecurity and how to prevent disease is [available on our bird flu page](#)
- For media queries contact Defra press office on 0330 041 6560