

# [New package of measures announced to support poultry industry with bird flu](#)

New government support for the poultry industry has been announced today (Friday 28th October) to assist farmers and producers with the impacts of bird flu. The United Kingdom is dealing with its worst ever bird flu outbreak with over 200 cases confirmed across the country in the last 12 months.

Under the new plans, the Government will alter the existing bird flu compensation scheme allowing compensation to be paid to farmers from the outset of planned culling rather than at the end. This will allow us to provide swifter payments to help stem any cash flow pressures and give earlier certainty about entitlement to compensation. The payments better reflect the impact of outbreaks on farmers.

In consultation with the Food Standards Agency, an easement to marketing rules is also being introduced in England. The measures mean that farmers who breed turkeys, geese or ducks for their meat will have the option to slaughter their flocks early and to freeze these products, which can then be defrosted and sold to consumers between the period 28 November and 31 December 2022. This option will give farmers certainty over business planning.

We have a highly resilient food supply chain, producing over 11 million turkeys in the United Kingdom every year, with just under two thirds of these consumed over the Christmas period.

## **Farming Minister Mark Spencer said:**

Farmers and poultry producers are facing real pressures as a result of this avian flu outbreak, and we know many are concerned about the impact on their flocks

We hope the practical solutions announced today will help provide greater financial certainty. We very much appreciate the continued cooperation from the sector as we battle this insidious disease and will continue to keep the situation under close review

Last week, the Chief Veterinary Officer [introduced a national Avian Influenza Prevention Zone](#) meaning that bird keepers must implement strict biosecurity measures to safeguard their flocks from this highly infectious disease. In addition to this, a regional housing measure remains in place across Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex, where keepers must house their flocks until further notice.

All bird keepers (whether they are pet birds, a commercial farm or just a few birds in a backyard flock) must remain vigilant and help prevent avian influenza by:

- cleanse and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and use effective vermin control
- keep records of mortality, movement of poultry and poultry products and any changes in production
- thoroughly clean and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
- keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
- minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds
- prevent access by poultry to ponds and watercourses and ensure that birds are kept in fenced or enclosed areas

Public health advice remains that the risk to human health from the virus is very low and food standards bodies advise that avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Do not touch or pick up any dead or sick birds that you find and instead report them to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77.

More information on the current bird flu outbreak can be found in [our rolling news story](#).