

Press release: New measures to protect against Avian Flu

The Government Chief Vet has confirmed new measures to protect against avian flu that take a more targeted approach to controlling the disease.

Following plans set out earlier this month, all poultry keepers across England [must continue to observe strict biosecurity measures, with housing or netting required in higher risk areas.](#)

This approach is based on the current situation and the latest veterinary advice, which concludes that it is the best option to control disease, protect birds' welfare and ensure consumers can buy free range products.

This new approach will apply from 28 February, when the current prevention zone expires. It gives most keepers the option to let birds outside whilst still taking reasonable precautions against avian flu. The ban on poultry gatherings remains in force.

All poultry keepers – whether they keep a commercial flock or a few chickens in their back garden – must continue to practise strict disease prevention measures, following Defra's guidance to take steps to reduce the risk of infection via the environment.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Effective disease control will always be our priority. H5N8 continues to circulate in wild birds and we must all continue to do everything we can to reduce the risk of disease. All keepers across the country must follow strict mandatory disease prevention measures.

Based on clear scientific evidence, the risk from wild birds is too high in some areas of England to rely on biosecurity measures alone. That's why we are requiring birds in Higher Risk Areas to be housed or protected from wild bird contact by netting.

We believe this is the best approach to control disease, protect birds' welfare and ensure consumers can buy free range products. As with any disease control measures these will be kept under review based on the latest situation and up-to-date scientific advice.

The risk of disease across the country remains high and measures are likely to be in place until at least the end of April.

The advice from Public Health England is that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for consumers.

What poultry keepers must do

H5N8 is spread from wild birds, as well as from infected kept birds, which is why people who keep poultry are currently required to take action to try to avoid contact between poultry and wild birds – either direct, bird-to-bird contact, or indirect contact via the environment, where disease can be spread through things like contaminated bird droppings.

The best way to avoid contact between poultry and wild birds is to keep them housed in a suitable building. However, the new targeted approach is designed to give keepers options and allow free range production to continue.

- Keepers in higher risk areas must continue to keep birds housed or netted. This is because, based on extensive scientific advice, we believe the risk from wild birds in these areas to be higher. These areas are close to large bodies of water where wild waterfowl congregate. We have published a paper outlining the rationale behind these areas and you can see if you are in one using our [interactive map](#).
- All other keepers can choose to continue to house birds or let birds outside into fenced areas, but must follow strict Defra guidance to reduce the risk of infection. This includes a risk assessment to check that outside areas are not contaminated and the risk of contact with wild birds is low. If you have any concerns you should continue to house your birds or keep them in covered runs or netted areas.

The H5N8 strain of the disease has been confirmed at a poultry farm in Suffolk, three linked premises on a commercial game farm in Lancashire, three separate poultry farms in Lincolnshire and in backyard flocks in North Yorkshire and Carmarthenshire. Where avian flu is confirmed, we take swift action to limit the spread of disease with restrictions around affected premises and full investigations to determine the source of infection. Further details of these cases are available in our [rolling news story](#).

Background

1. This announcement follows [plans set out earlier this month](#).
2. Keepers can find out if they are in a Higher Risk Area using our [interactive map](#).
3. Keepers should read our [guidance on what they must do under the new Prevention Zone](#).
4. Read [Defra's rationale for Higher Risk Areas in England from 28 February](#).

5. For further information on what the new Prevention Zone means for poultry keepers, contact the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77.

[News story: Innovative natural ingredient could help prevent diabetes](#)

From:

First published:

24 February 2017

Part of:

Innovate UK-supported life science company Phynova finds further evidence that its plant-based food ingredient promotes healthy blood sugar.

In a clinical trial run in conjunction with the [University of Southampton](#) and [Oxford Brookes University](#), [Phynova](#) found clinical proof that its ingredient Reducose™ is effective at maintaining healthy blood glucose levels.

The study was funded through an Innovate UK grant. It demonstrated that Reducose™ could significantly suppress blood glucose and insulin rises after eating.

Reducose™ is a patented natural functional food ingredient. Derived from mulberry leaves, it can be incorporated directly into foods and drinks or used on its own in supplements to prevent sugar being absorbed by the body.

Dr. Mark Lown, lead author and clinical investigator, said:

It has been estimated that as much as a third of the UK population are prediabetic, where blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be classed as diabetes. Excess calories from sugar and carbohydrate can increase the risk of developing diabetes.

The results of this study are positive and suggest that this herbal extract may have a role to play in regulating blood sugar levels. Further studies are required to evaluate the long-term effects.

The findings of the study are published on [open access journal PLOS ONE](#) and can be read for free.

[News story: Manchester seminar: Can small changes make a big difference? Applying behavioural insights to public services \(6 April, 2017\)](#)

From:

First published:

23 February 2017

Part of:

Felicity Algate, Director of the Behavioural Insights Team will introduce 'behavioural insights' and talk through examples behavioural insights approaches to public service design

6 April, 2017

featuring

Felicity Algate

Director, Behavioural Insights Team North

Please see the attached flyer for details and how to book.

PDF, 322KB, 1 page

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[Press release: PM meeting with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi: 23 February 2017](#)

From:

First published:

23 February 2017

Part of:

Prime Minister May met with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and they discussed regional security, defence and trade.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister welcomed His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to Downing Street today for their first formal bilateral meeting.

They discussed a range of international defence and security matters, and agreed on the importance of efforts to combat terrorism and bring stability to the Middle East. The Prime Minister reiterated the message she gave to the Gulf Cooperation Council Heads of State in December, that Gulf security is fundamental to our security, and that we remain a committed partner on this agenda.

On regional issues, they agreed on the need to find solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and stressed the importance of inclusive political settlements as the only way to deliver long-term stability.

The Prime Minister talked about the conference on Somalia that the UK will host this year, and welcomed the Crown Prince's commitment to work together to ensure Somalia's recent progress can continue.

They also committed to build on the close and historic bilateral relationship between the UK and United Arab Emirates, including by stepping up our already strong trade and investment ties.

[News story: New electricity connection to France gets go-ahead](#)

The new ElecLink electricity connection between Britain and France will provide greater access to the continental electricity market, and help to reduce consumer bills as electricity can be flexibly imported and exported to take advantage of cheaper prices.

The project will run through the Channel Tunnel between Sellindge in the UK and Les Mandarins in France. It will have the capacity to power up to 2 million homes and provide further resilience for Britain's electricity supply.

A combination of domestic electricity generation including new nuclear power, gas and renewables, as well as increased access for importing and exporting electricity supplies from Europe, means homes and businesses will have reliable power at the lowest possible price all year round.

Thanks to the Government's supportive regulatory framework, including allowing interconnectors to participate in the Capacity Market, and innovative solutions from the developer, this major new piece of infrastructure will be financed on a purely commercial basis, with no risk to British tax and bill payers.

UK Energy Minister Jesse Norman said:

As a government we are strongly supportive of greater electricity trading with our European partners in order to lower household bills and deliver energy security as part of our modern industrial strategy.

We've created the right environment for cooperative projects like ElecLink to attract investment and compete in the market without needing financial support from our tax and bill payers.

The ElecLink interconnector is one of the most advanced new interconnection projects across Europe and the first of its kind between Britain and France since 1986, when the existing IFA (Interconnexion France-Angleterre) interconnector was commissioned.

ElecLink has said that the new interconnector will:

- Provide a gigawatt (1000MW) of electricity connection between the UK and France, enough capacity to power up to 2 million homes
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 6 million tonnes over the period 2020-2030, by enabling electricity demand in Britain and France to be met by the most efficient generating plants
- Create approximately 300 new jobs during the construction phase

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Groupe Eurotunnel Jacques Gounon said:

ElecLink further underlines how important the Channel Tunnel is to Britain and France. Not only is it a vital transport link, it is set to play an instrumental part in the supply of electricity to the UK, France and continental Europe.

With the debate over the future of energy security brought into

focus recently, ElecLink delivers a smart, low-cost and environmentally friendly way to secure the electricity supply. We are proud to be inaugurating ElecLink and delighted to mark the official start of this great project which will significantly benefit the economies and consumers in both France and the United Kingdom.