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Saturday 17th December: AVIAN INFLUENZA (BIRD FLU) UPDATE



Press release

Avian influenza (bird flu) identified at Lincolnshire farm



From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) and [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#)

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The risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency have made it clear that bird flu is not a food safety risk.

Avian flu of the H5N8 strain has been confirmed in turkeys at a farm near Louth in Lincolnshire today (16 December).

Most birds at the premises have died - any remaining birds there will be humanely culled. We have put in place a 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance 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.

There is not anticipated to be any impact on the supplies of turkeys or other birds over Christmas.

Chief Veterinary Officer, Nigel Gibbens, said:

Avian flu has been confirmed on a turkey farm in Lincolnshire. This is the same strain that has been affecting poultry in Europe. Immediate steps have been taken to limit the risk of the disease spreading and all remaining 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 farm to control and eliminate it.

A PHE spokesperson said:

Avian flu (often called bird flu) is primarily a disease of birds. There have never been any recorded cases of H5N8 in humans and the risk to public health is considered very low. We continue to work closely with Defra throughout this investigation. Despite the risk being very low, we will offer health advice to those people who may have been exposed on the farm as a precaution.

The Prevention Zones (housing orders) put in place on Tuesday 6 December remains in place in England, Scotland and Wales, including within the Protection and Surveillance Zones. Poultry and captive bird keepers should continue to house their birds, where practicable, maintain their biosecurity and remain vigilant about the health of their birds.

A detailed investigation is in progress to determine the most likely source of this outbreak. At the moment the restrictions in place mean that all premises with poultry and/or captive birds within the zones will continue to house their birds, if possible. The movement of birds, mammals and other things, such as carcasses, eggs, used poultry litter and manure, on or off premises where poultry is present and out of the zones are banned except under license. 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 at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Suspected disease should be reported to APHA offices immediately on [03000 200 301](tel:03000200301)

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.

Further information on biosecurity and how to prevent disease is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). For further advice on Avian Influenza please contact the Defra Helpline on 03459 33 55 77.