

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Avian Influenza update: further swan positive for H5N1

Following confirmation on Thursday 10th January of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in three swans in Dorset, Defra has today confirmed that another mute swan collected on 11 January as part of wild bird surveillance from the same area has tested positive for highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza.

There is currently no evidence to suggest widespread disease in the wild bird population, but enhanced surveillance is taking place and poultry keepers in the area are reminded to remain vigilant and report any signs of disease immediately. There is no evidence of disease in domestic birds.

Further information

1. Information is available from the Defra Helpline (08459 33 55 77) - see www.defra.gov.uk for current opening hours. Bird keepers can also call the Animal Health recorded information line for the latest updates on 0844 884 4600.
2. Avian Influenza is a disease of birds. While it can pass very rarely and with difficulty to humans, this usually requires extremely close contact with infected birds, particularly faeces. Advice from the Food Standards Agency remains that properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.
3. All Avian Influenza (H1 to H16) can be low pathogenic but only H5 and H7 are known to become highly pathogenic.
4. Inside the Control Area and the Monitoring Area, the measures required by the EU Wild Bird Decision will be applied, including bird movements which will be restricted.
5. All poultry keepers registered with the GB Poultry Register will be contacted by text message with updates. All poultry keepers responsible for a premises with 50 or more birds are legally required to register. Defra strongly encourages those with less than 50 birds to register voluntarily.
6. The details on the measures that apply in the current zones can be found on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/avianflu

7. This is the second highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza case detected in a wild bird in the British Isles. The previous case was the swan found in Cellardyke, Fife in April 2006.
8. Recent H5N1 cases in commercial poultry in Britain:
November 2007 – premises near Diss, Norfolk
February 2007 – premises in Upper Holton, Suffolk
October 2005 – quarantine premises in Essex