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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) in poultry in Germany

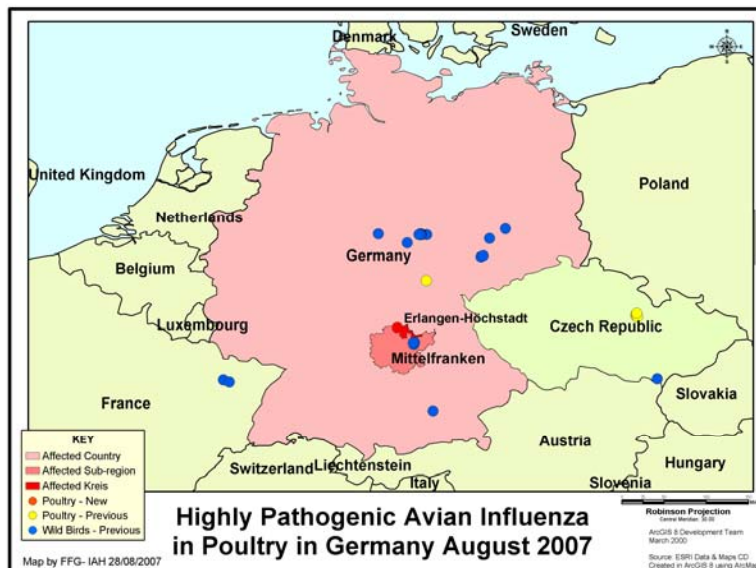
Note: Defra's International Trade Core Function (ITCF) monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is among those diseases of major concern.

Disease report

Germany has confirmed an outbreak of avian influenza HPAI (H5N1) in a commercial duck farm in Wackerroth in Erlangen-Höchstadt (Mittelfranken, Bavaria) (see map) (European Commission, 2007a). This was confirmed as on 25 August 2007. and all birds on the holding were destroyed on 27 August. Control measures have been put in place.

Situation assessment

Germany, France and Czech Republic have recently reported a number of cases of H5N1 HPAI in wild birds in various locations over a broad area (blue dots). There have also been outbreaks in domestic poultry in central Germany and in Czech Republic (yellow dots).



Germany has applied disease control measures as required by EU rules by establishing a 3 km radius protection zone and a 10 km radius surveillance zone. It has also established an additional 13 km radius buffer zone as agreed with the Commission (European Commission, 2007b & 2007c).

Intra-Community trade in live poultry and poultry meat is subject to EU animal health rules. Germany has banned the sale of all frozen poultry products produced between 31 July and 24 August 2007. The European Commission has advised that three consignments of live poultry were imported into Great Britain from the affected region of Germany during the risk period. However, these consignments were not from the infected premises nor from the affected district. These consignments, from a single consignor to a single consignee, will be investigated as a precaution.

The TRACES electronic database records the movement of live poultry and poultry hatching eggs that require veterinary certification under EU rules. Traces does not, however, record

poultry meat and other poultry products intended for human consumption that do not require official veterinary certification under EU rules.

Our earlier risk assessments (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/hpai-developments110507.pdf>; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/hpai-europe300606.pdf>) considered the possibility that the virus may have been introduced in wild bird populations in a number of discrete pockets and maintained at a very low level that is difficult to detect. Subsequent events (the wild bird and poultry outbreaks in Czech Republic, Germany and France) appear to support that possibility. Sporadic outbreaks of H5N1 may continue to occur within Europe in the summer of 2007. The possibility remains that local or migratory movements may carry the disease to unaffected regions once the normal autumn migration commences. This situation may also apply to other types of H5 or H7 avian influenza of highly pathogenic (HPAI) or low pathogenic (LPAI) strains.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above report and our previous risk assessments we consider that these recent HPAI outbreaks in Europe do not significantly alter our previous overall conclusion that there is an increased but still low likelihood that the virus may be introduced from the currently affected areas to the UK.

The likelihood of the introduction of the virus from Germany to the UK via legal importation of live poultry is considered negligible at this stage.

This outbreak again highlights the importance of maintaining high biosecurity standards with regard to domestic poultry, especially in regions where migratory birds congregate.

On the basis of this and previous outbreaks, further developments may be likely and we will continue to monitor and review the situation.

Should H5N1 virus, or any other type of H5 or H7 HPAI, continue to be detected in wild birds in the affected area, it is unlikely to be introduced to the UK by direct movements before the autumn migration. However, this risk will be reviewed should the virus be detected in wild birds in areas within the major migratory flyway that may involve direct movements to the UK in the near future.

References

European Commission. (2007a). 1) Avian Influenza - confirmation of highly pathogenic subtype H5N1 in poultry in Germany (Bavaria). Urgent Fax 756 27/08/2007. Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, Brussels, D1 (07) D/411936.

European Commission. (2007b). Avian Influenza – adoption of a Decision establishing A and B zones I Germany after confirmation of highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H5N1 in a duck holding in Germany (Bavaria). Urgent Fax 758 27/08/2007. Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, Brussels, D1 (07) D/411945.

European Commission. (2007c). Avian Influenza – publication of Commission Decision 2007/591/EC. Urgent Fax 759 28/08/2007. Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, Brussels, D1 (07) D/411946.