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## Newcastle disease – Greece, Romania and Estonia

**Note:** Defra Food and Farming Group - International Trade Core Function (FFG-ITCF) monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Newcastle disease (ND) is among those diseases of major concern.

### 1 Disease Report

The following information was received from the European Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on three outbreaks of Newcastle disease (ND) in Greece, Romania and Estonia (see map). A 3 km Protection and 10 km Surveillance Zone have been placed around the premises as required by EU rules.



#### 1.1 Greece

Greece reported an outbreak of Newcastle disease (ND) in the north of the island of Crete on 1 November 2007. The disease has affected one premises with fattening broiler chickens. In total, there are 4 poultry farms in the two zones.

The last reported case of Newcastle Disease in Greece occurred in February 2006. The source of the current outbreak remains unknown or inconclusive.

## **1.2 Romania**

Romania reported another outbreak of ND in a back-yard poultry flock in Covasna (central part of the country) on 2 November 2007. The last reported case of ND occurred in August 2007. The source of the current outbreak remains unknown or inconclusive.

## **1.3 Estonia**

Estonia reported an outbreak of ND in a flock of commercial poultry from Harju in the north of the country on 5 November 2007. The last reported case of ND occurred in July 2007. The source of the current outbreak is suspected to be airborne or contact with a wild bird species.

## **2 Situation Assessment**

These are new reports in addition to previous outbreaks in a few EU member states that were reported recently. ND is a disease of poultry caused by virulent strains of avian paramyxovirus type 1 (APMV1). The disease is notifiable throughout the EU. ND virus may be present in certain species of wild birds.

ND was also reported in some other countries in Europe during 2007. The outbreaks appear to result from infections with multiple genetic lineages of the APMV-1. Predominantly these infections are occurring in back-yard flocks. However, there have been some incursions of the disease into commercial poultry in the Baltic region involving a variant of pigeon paramyxovirus type 1(4b).

Trade in live poultry and poultry products is restricted when disease occurs. Vaccination is practised in most countries. In the UK vaccination is permitted and widely employed but it is not compulsory. Vaccination policy recognises that there is a constant low level risk of introduction of ND to UK poultry from wild birds. Infection is unlikely to establish in an effectively vaccinated flock.

EU rules prevent trade in poultry and poultry meat from any area under restriction. Imported live poultry not from restricted areas must come from officially registered premises and accompanied by a health certificate signed by a veterinarian.

TRACES, (the EC electronic notification system) reports that there have been no commercial imports into the UK of live birds or hatching eggs from Estonia, Greece or Romania over the previous three months.

## **3 Conclusion**

There is negligible direct risk to the UK from these outbreaks of ND. However, the recent developments also emphasise the need to maintain good biosecurity to prevent contact of poultry with wild birds and pigeons. It is also important that proper vaccination procedures are followed if ND vaccine is applied in the UK. We will continue to monitor the situation and review this assessment if required.

## **4 References**

- OIE. (2007). Newcastle Disease, Greece. OIE Immediate notification report Ref OIE: 6416, Report Date: 01/11/2007
- OIE, (2007). Newcastle disease in Romania. OIE Alert message 071102 ROM received by e-mail on 02 November 2007.
- OIE, (2007). Newcastle disease in Estonia. OIE Alert message 071105 EST received by e-mail on 05 November 2007.