Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Outbreaks of H5N1 HPAI in poultry in Israel

20th January 2015

Ref: VITT/1200 H5N1 HPAI in Israel

Disease Report

Israel has reported a single outbreak of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Haifa, in north eastern Israel close to the Mediterranean coast. The outbreak is in a fattening turkey premises with over 140,000 birds present. Disease control measures have been implemented including culling and disease control zones. There is one other commercial poultry premises within the protection zone, 350 metres from the infected premises with 61,000 turkeys. The birds on this neighbouring premises are not showing any clinical signs (OIE 2015).

Situation Assessment

The last HPAI outbreak in Israel was caused by H5N1 HPAI in Hadarom province in the south of Israel in March 2012 (OIE 2012); the outbreak was swiftly controlled and led to no further spread. In recent weeks there has been an increase in reporting of H5 HPAI: in Nigeria a market was confirmed infected as well as an increase in Egypt of human and poultry cases of H5N1 HPAI (see map below). Although the N type has not been reported in the Nigerian outbreaks, it will be interesting to see if these are related viruses. In previous years, the same clade (clade 2.2 and its derivatives) has been circulating in West Africa, North Africa and the Middle East (Fusaro, 2010; WHO/OIE/FAO, 2014). These countries are connected through trade routes and have wild bird migratory pathways in common.
Israel is currently authorised for imports of all poultry commodities falling under the scope of Commission Regulation (EC) No 798/2008. (European Commission 2015). The Israeli Authorities have confirmed export certification is temporarily on hold.

According to TRACES, the EU trade notification system, there have been only a very limited number of consignments of poultry meat to the UK from Israel since November 2014, and none originated in the affected region of Israel.

**Conclusion**

There is no significant increase in risk for the incursion of HPAI H5N1 into the UK as a result of this outbreak; the west of Europe there is very limited trade from these affected regions and is part of a different migratory pathway. While we consider there to be a constant low risk of incursion of any notifiable avian disease into poultry throughout the year, the current situation in Europe means the UK is at an increased risk at present for the incursion of H5N8 HPAI into wild birds or poultry and vigilance for any signs of notifiable avian disease is very important.

We will continue to report on the situation. We would like to remind all poultry keepers and attending veterinarians to maintain high standards of biosecurity and report any suspicion of avian notifiable disease promptly.

**Authors**

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References

European Commission (2015) Highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N1 in Israel Outbreak confirmed in a fattening turkey holding in the district of Haifa, province of Hazafon. Fax received 19/01/2015.


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