

Avian influenza (bird flu) controls

Rules on meat produced from poultry and farmed game birds originating in Protection Zone(s)

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Summary

This document applies to food business operators (FBOs) (excluding distributors and retailers) following the declaration of protection and surveillance zones in the light of recent cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), to control disease.

It provides an explanation of the specific rules they have to follow for any meat produced from poultry or farmed game birds originating within Protection Zone(s). The rules relate to the marking, separation and movement of meat intended for human consumption.

We make these rules in order to reduce animal health risks. Other poultry meat (that is, from poultry not originating within Protection Zone(s)) is unaffected. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for consumers.

This document only applies to HPAI in poultry and is not a definitive statement of the law – precise requirements are set out in legislation and the General Licences we have issued. Specific information around individual cases, and the controls applied, is published at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>.

Meat from poultry or farmed game birds originating within Protection Zones can be moved or sold, subject to a number of conditions. These include a requirement that the health mark is replaced with a specific mark (approved by the Secretary of State for each outbreak) which must remain with it throughout any processing or repackaging. Under some specific circumstances, the recipient of poultry meat is permitted to remove the specific mark temporarily for production, and in some circumstance not to re-apply it.

Legal framework

The following legislation is relevant to outbreaks of **H5N8** type HPAI: [The Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals \(England\) \(No.2\) Order 2006](#).

Additional legislation applies to an outbreak of **H5N1** type avian influenza in poultry or wild birds. This document does not apply to such outbreaks.

Restricted and unrestricted meat

The term “**restricted meat**” is used to mean:

- Meat from poultry originating from a Protection Zone (PZ);
- Meat from poultry originating from an area that subsequently became a protection zone and was slaughtered 20 or fewer days **before** the date estimated by a veterinary inspector as being the earliest date of infection at a premise in the relevant zone. This date may change as the epidemiology of the outbreak develops. A list of dates is provided in the Table of Key Dates below.
- To help businesses the dates which apply to restricted meat will be published online. This date may change as the epidemiology of the outbreak develops;
- Meat that has not been kept separate from the previous two categories
- Any meat, processed meat or meat products derived from any of the above.

The term “**unrestricted meat**” is used to mean:

- Meat from poultry originating outside of a PZ; or

- Meat from poultry originating in an area that subsequently became a PZ but was slaughtered at least 21 days or more **before** the date estimated by a veterinary inspector as being the earliest date of infection at a premise in the relevant PZ. This date may change as the epidemiology of the outbreak develops. A list of dates is provided in the Table of Key Dates below.
- Any meat falling into the restricted meat category that has been heat treated to at least 70°C throughout by an approved establishment (in accordance with Article 4 of Regulations (EU) No 853/2004) becomes unrestricted meat and can be marked with the oval identification mark.
- There are no special measures for meat produced from wild game birds during an outbreak of HPAI **in poultry**, thus all such meat is unrestricted.

Meat from birds slaughtered after the lifting of the PZ will be unrestricted meat. However, meat from any birds slaughtered before the PZ is lifted and falling under the definition of restricted meat will remain restricted, as will any meat that is subsequently not kept separate from restricted meat.

Requirements of restricted meat

- Restricted meat must be marked with a special mark by an approved establishment, which must then be carried throughout the chain (see illustration below);
- The special mark must not be removed except under issue of licence EXD264(HPAI)(E)¹ which allows for the removal and reapplication of the mark for processing and repackaging;
- FBO receiving live poultry, farmed game or farmed game carcasses from a PZ must ensure that meat from those birds is obtained, cut, transported and stored separately from other meat;
- Restricted meat which is packaged and correctly marked may be stored in the same location as packaged unrestricted meat.
- Restricted meat bearing the special mark must be kept separate from unrestricted meat at all times including during transportation;
- Restricted meat must be produced in accordance with Article 63 (2) of The Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals (England) (No.2) Order 2006;

¹ Published at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> alongside this document

- Slaughterhouses which are designated by the FSA to receive and process birds from a PZ must notify its clients accordingly.

The special mark shall be:



Where:

- a) letters must be 8mm high
- b) approval number of the premises (XXXX) must be 11mm high
- c) diameter of mark not less than 30mm
- d) thickness of the border of 3mm

In the case of packaging containing cut meat or offal, the mark must be applied to a label fixed to the packaging, or printed on the packaging, in such a way that it is destroyed when the packaging is opened. This is not necessary, however, if the process of opening destroys the packaging.

When wrapping provides the same protection as packaging, the label may be affixed to the wrapping.

For products of animal origin that are placed in transport containers or large packages and are intended for further handling, processing, wrapping or packaging in another establishment, the mark may be applied to the external surface of the container or packaging.

Please note you are required to maintain the special mark on packaging/ wrapping throughout the chain until it reaches the consumer. General licence EXD264(HPAI)(E)² allows for the special mark to be removed for the purposes of processing and/or repacking, subject to the conditions set out in the Schedule. Retail butchers and catering establishments directly supplying the final consumer may remove the special mark and are not required to reapply it.

Any unrestricted meat that has come into contact at any stage of transport, storage, processing or handling, with any restricted meat, must be handled as if it were controlled meat and the above conditions, including marking applied.

² Published at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> alongside this document

Meat marking – small on-farm slaughterhouse exemptions

Some small throughput establishments are not eligible to apply a health or identification mark to meat. At these establishments, the specific mark described in this document should not be applied as this would suggest a degree of meat inspection and control that is not applicable at these premises. The absence of a mark achieves the same outcome as the animal health specific mark as the meat is not eligible for export to 3rd countries or for intra-community trade.

Movement of restricted meat and products

General licence EXD249(HPAI)(E)³ is available to allow movements of restricted meat subject to the conditions of that licence being met.

Requirements for premises to process meat during an outbreak

Slaughterhouses that are either located within the Protection Zone (PZ)/ Surveillance Zone (SZ), or are located outside of the PZ/ SZ but receive and process poultry originating from within the PZ only are required to apply to the Food Standards Agency – email approvals@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk - for designation.

These designations are defined as:

- Level 1 – Premises handling only unrestricted poultry originating from outside the PZ which will produce unrestricted meat during an outbreak of avian influenza
- Level 2 – Premises receiving poultry originating from within the PZ which will produce restricted meat during an outbreak of avian influenza

Disposal of waste and animal by-products

Level 2 designated slaughterhouses processing birds from the PZ are required to adhere to the special animal by-product (ABP) categorisation and disposal rules in accordance with Articles 9, 10, 13 and 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1069/2009:

- No raw product is allowed to go into pet food production

³ Published at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> alongside this document

- FBO will need a written confirmation from the rendering company that Category 3 ABP material will be subjected to a minimum heat treatment of 70°C
- If the FBO does not have this confirmation, Category 3 ABPs from birds originating from a PZ must be disposed as Category 2 ABP or above
- If Category 3 ABPs from birds originating in the PZ is mixed with Category 3 ABP from birds outside the PZ, the above controls apply to the entirety.

All approved meat processing establishments handling restricted meat bearing the special mark are advised to dispose of Category 3 ABP through a route that involves heat treatment to a minimum of 70°C.

Table of key dates

In the rules, the terms “restricted meat” and “unrestricted meat” are defined on the basis of when poultry are slaughtered, and by reference to the date estimated by a veterinary inspector as being the earliest date of infection at a premise in the relevant zone.

The following list, for each recent Infected Premises (IP), defines this date. This information may change as the epidemiology of an outbreak develops.

Infected Premises	Zone declared	Earliest infection date *	Meat produced from poultry originating in this area on or since this date is restricted *	Until the protection zone is lifted
Haltwhistle, Northumberland	24 February 2017 (IP10)	7 February 2017	18 January 2017	20 March 2017
Redgrave, Diss, Suffolk	14 February 2017 (IP9)	31 January 2017	11 January 2017	14 March 2017
Pilling, Wyre, Lancashire	30 January 2017 (IP8)	18 January 2017	29 December 2016	7 March 2017
Pilling, Wyre, Lancashire	27 January 2017 (IP7)	19 January 2017	30 December 2016	27 February 2017
Boston, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire	26 January 2017 (IP6)	17 January 2017	28 December 2016	22 February 2017
Pilling, Wyre, Lancashire	24 January 2017 (IP5)	12 January 2017	23 December 2016	27 February 2017
Louth, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire	16 January 2017 (IP4)	11 January 2017	22 December 2016	11 February 2017

Settle, North Yorkshire	6 January 2017 (IP3)	25 December 2016	5 December 2016	31 January 2017
Carmarthen, Wales	3 January 2017 (IP2)	14 December 2016	24 November 2016	26 January 2017
Louth, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire	16 December 2016 (IP1)	8 December 2016	18 November 2016	8 January 2017

* This table of dates will be updated as the outbreak develops. The earliest infection date and the related “restricted” date may change as the investigations into the source of disease on each infected premises develops. We will update this table to reflect revised dates.

Restricted meat remains restricted despite the ending of the Protection Zone.