Updated Situation Assessment #16

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Europe

07 May 2020     Ref: VITT/1200 HPAI in Europe

Disease report

Since our last report on 21 April 2020, Hungary has reported 69 new outbreaks of HPAI H5N8. All continue to be in commercial poultry premises. There have been no other new reports elsewhere in Europe.

Situation assessment

Since 21 April, Hungary has reported 69 outbreaks in commercial poultry. While the majority (66) have been reported to ADNS as secondary outbreaks, there have been three new primary outbreaks reported in Békés County. These are in the localities of Battonya,
Nagykamarás and Kondoros and are situated in the south east of Hungary. Battonya and Nagykamarás are particularly close to its Romanian border (approximately 5km and 14km respectively). In the premises at Battonya, a holding of 10,760 fattening turkeys, aged between 6 and 15 weeks, demonstrated increased mortality in its 15 week-old birds. Samples were taken and sent to the National Reference Laboratory, with confirmation received on 26 April. Epidemiological inquiry has identified feed lorry movements as being the most likely source of virus introduction. In the outbreak at Nagykamaras, in a premises housing 9,872 breeding geese, a similar increase in mortality was observed, however, so far there has been no epidemiological link identified with the outbreak at Battonya. The most recent primary outbreak is located at Kondoros, at a premises of 11,138 fattening turkeys. Samples were sent to the National Reference Laboratory on 02 May, with HPAI H5N8 being confirmed on 05 May. There are, to date, no details of any epidemiological enquiry into the outbreak for this premises.

All remaining outbreaks that have been reported since 21 April are secondary outbreaks, and are related to the two clusters at Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád. For the outbreak at Bács-Kiskun, which was first confirmed on 25 March, there has now been a total of 224 secondary outbreaks; and for the outbreak at Csongrád, there has now been a total of 24 secondary outbreaks. Both primary outbreaks housed a significant number of ducks, but there remains no official update of the species for these secondary outbreaks. (Numbers of birds on farms for these secondary outbreaks vary from a few hundred to 160,000.) In all the farms, measures for control and eradication have been prompt. Movement restrictions continue, with surveillance measures established in accordance with Council Directive 2005/94/EC and Hungarian legislation. No cases in wild birds have been reported to date. Disease appears to be widespread in commercial premises in southern Hungary, with surveillance activities identifying new outbreaks. It is assumed that these outbreaks represent the most southern extension of the ongoing H5N8 outbreak in northern-central Europe, the progenitor of which is related to the African strain of H5N8, and are not the same HPAIV H5N8 strain that has been circulating in Bulgaria since 2018.

Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine have reported no new outbreaks since our last update on 21 April.

According to data available on TRACES\(^1\), GB has not imported any live birds or eggs from any of the areas surrounding these outbreaks in the weeks prior to and after detection of disease.

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\(^1\) Trade Control and Expert System
Conclusion

The OIE/FAO international reference laboratory/UK national laboratory at Weybridge has the necessary ongoing diagnostic capability for these strains of virus, whether low or high pathogenicity AI, and continually monitors changes in the virus.

An outbreak of HPAI H5N8 was reported in poultry in north-western Germany near to the eastern border of the Netherlands in March. Since then, there have been no new reports of outbreaks in poultry or cases in wild birds nearer to the UK. Therefore, the risk of HPAI incursion in wild birds into the UK is still considered to be LOW (i.e. no change at present). We are monitoring this very closely.

The overall risk of infection of poultry in the UK remains low, but the risk of introduction to individual premises depends upon the level of biosecurity implemented on farm to prevent direct or indirect contact with wild birds. It should be noted that the virus could potentially survive on pasture in wild bird faeces for several weeks at ambient temperatures at this time of year, emphasising the importance of these measures. We recommend biosecurity measures should be maintained. We are keeping this under review.

Immunity of UK wild birds to H5 HPAI may be low at present. We recommend that all poultry keepers stay vigilant and make themselves aware of the latest information on www.gov.uk, particularly about recommendations for biosecurity and how to register their flocks. We will continue to report on any updates to the situation in Europe and, in particular, any changes in disease distribution or wild bird movements which may increase the risk to the UK.


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References

All outbreaks and cases were taken from the Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS).
Details of outbreaks were also taken from OIE.
OIE (2020)
https://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Diseaseinformation/WI


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