

Avian Influenza guidance notes

What is Avian Influenza?

Avian Influenza (AI) is a disease which can affect poultry. Some strains of AI are notifiable – suspicion of infection must be reported to the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) It is an offence not to report a suspected case to APHA.

There are two types of avian influenza:

- Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is the more serious type, and it is often fatal in birds.

Clinical signs may include:

- Swollen head
- Blue discoloration of the neck and throat
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory distress such as coughing or sneezing
- Diarrhoea
- Increased mortality

- Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) is usually less serious and can cause mild breathing problems but affected birds will not always show clear signs of infection. Clinical signs tend to be milder.

In rare cases, when there is close contact between humans and infected birds, some strains can be transmitted to humans – this is known as zoonosis.

Is there a risk to humans?

Public Health England advise that the risk to human health from the current strain (H5N1) is very low.

Is there a food safety risk?

No. There is no risk from consuming poultry. As always, poultry products should be thoroughly cooked as per the usual food safety guidance.

What are the restrictions?

When Avian Influenza (AI) is confirmed, APHA put in place a number of measures to contain the outbreak and try to reduce spread. This usually includes movement restrictions so that poultry keepers in affected areas are not moving infected birds. The type of movement restriction depends on the strain of AI.

Highly pathogenic- minimum 3km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone

Low pathogenic- 1km restriction around affected farm

Why does this affect pig movements?

Producers who also keep poultry may need to apply for an additional licence should their unit be put into a restriction zone.

If producers do not keep poultry, they do not need to take any action.

How do producers know if they are in a restriction zone?

APHA publish an interactive map of the current outbreak situation [here](#)

AHDB Health and Welfare team also publish the movement restriction zones on eAML2. This means producers will be alerted that they are registering a pig movement into or out of a restriction zone.

This will not physically stop a movement- only advise producers that they are moving into or out of a

restriction zone and may need an additional licence should they also keep poultry. It is the responsibility of the producer to ensure they are compliant and therefore producers should check the APHA map regularly as it is liable to change at short notice.

How to apply for an additional licence – General licence EXD247

If a unit is in a restriction Zone and birds are also kept on the premises, producers will need an additional licence to move their pigs.

A general licence has been published on the [Defra website](#) for movements from protection and surveillance zones in England and Wales. Producers should read this and check the terms of any movement. Producers should check that the general licence is still in place for when the planned movement will take place.

Any queries should be directed to the APHA Licensing Team directly on:

Telephone: 03000 200 301

Email: outbreak.licensing@apha.gov.uk

If the unit is compliant with the conditions listed on the general licence, producers need to follow the steps below to register their movement:

1. Create a standard pig movement, as usual, using eAML2
2. Print a copy of the general licence [General licence EXD247 pdf](#)

THIS MUST BE PRINTED AND TRAVEL WITH THE PIGS

What if pigs are kept on an infected premises?

The farm will be put under movement restriction, and it is likely that all movements, including pigs, will be stopped whilst APHA try to contain the virus. Each outbreak will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and APHA will advise the producer on the next stages.

What about wild birds?

Producers should lawfully deter wild birds from their unit, this includes removal of or at least netting ponds or areas of standing water.

What is the mandatory housing order?

In order to reduce the spread of Avian Influenza the government have introduced a mandatory housing order for all bird keepers. The new housing measures, which will come into force on 29th November, mean that it will be a legal requirement for all bird keepers to keep their birds indoors and to follow strict biosecurity measures in order to limit the spread of and eradicate the disease. More information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bird-flu-latest-situation-avian-influenza-prevention-zone-declared-across-great-britain>.

Where can producers go for specific advice?

The APHA licensing team can give specific advice:

Telephone: 03000 200 301

Email: outbreak.licensing@apha.gov.uk