

H5N8 confirmed in broiler breeder chickens near Leominster

A case of avian influenza H5N8 (pathogenicity yet to be determined) in broiler breeder chickens near Leominster in Herefordshire was confirmed on 11 November 2020.

Avian influenza (HPAI) H5N8 in broiler breeder chickens at a premises near Leominster, in Herefordshire. A 3km (Area A) and 10km (Area B) Temporary Control Zone have been put in place around the infected premises. Details of the measures that apply in the Temporary Control Zone can be found in the [Declaration of a Temporary Control Zone \(Avian Influenza\)](#) (PDF, 797KB, 14 pages).

Risk level

Following confirmed cases of avian influenza in England and increasing reports of avian influenza affecting flocks in mainland Europe, the risk level for avian influenza incursion in wild birds in GB was been raised from 'medium' to 'high' on the 6 November 2020.

The risk level for the disease being introduced to poultry premises in GB was also raised from 'low' to 'medium' on the 6 November. It should be noted that the risk of introduction to individual premises depends upon the level of biosecurity implemented on a premises to prevent direct or indirect contact with wild birds.

In response the Chief Vets from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are urging bird keepers across the UK to maintain and strengthen their biosecurity measures in order to prevent further outbreaks of avian influenza in the UK.

If you keep poultry (including game birds or as pets), you should follow our [biosecurity best practice advice](#). Remain vigilant for any signs of disease in your flock and report any sign of avian influenza to Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

Public Health England advises that the risk to the public's health is very low. Food Standards Agency (FSA) has said that on the basis of the current scientific evidence, avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers

Avian influenza is unconnected with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Biosecurity advice

If you keep poultry or other captive birds, you must take action to reduce the risk of disease in your flock by following government advice on biosecurity. This is especially relevant if your birds are located in a Higher Risk Area (HRA).

Good biosecurity improves the overall health and productivity of your flock by helping keep out poultry diseases such as avian influenza and limiting the spread of disease in an outbreak.

This applies just as much if you only have a few birds as pets, or if you have a large commercial flock. An outbreak of bird flu in back garden chickens results in the same restrictions on movement of birds. It has the same effect on farmers and trade in poultry as an outbreak on a commercial farm.

To ensure good biosecurity, all poultry keepers should:

- minimise movement in and out of bird enclosures
- clean footwear before and after visiting birds, using a [Defra approved disinfectant](#) at entrances and exits
- clean and disinfect vehicles and equipment that have come into contact with poultry
- keep areas where birds live clean and tidy, and regularly disinfect hard surfaces such as paths and walkways
- humanely control rats and mice
- place birds' food and water in fully enclosed areas protected from wild birds, and remove any spilled feed regularly
- avoid keeping ducks and geese with other poultry species, where possible
- keep birds separate from wildlife and wild waterfowl by putting suitable fencing around outdoor areas they access
- keep a close watch on birds for any signs of disease and report any very sick birds or unexplained deaths to your vet