



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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To All Provincial Directors

Dear Colleagues,

HPAI H5N8 AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK CONTROL MEASURES

Highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N8 was confirmed in a broiler breeder site in Mpumalanga on Thursday 22 June 2017. DAFF would like to communicate a strategy on dealing with this challenge, as well as any further suspect or confirmed cases of HPAI in chickens in other locations.

Once HPAI is confirmed on a farm, the Provincial Veterinary Services should identify the 3 km radius and the 30 km radius. Reference to “farm” implies all commercial, small upcoming as well as backyard poultry operations. The control measures must be applied as follows:

1. HPAI suspect farm

- 1.1 Quarantine and a complete standstill must be instituted on the movement of poultry and poultry products, where nothing enters the farm and nothing leaves; with immediate notification of Provincial Director and DAFF;
- 1.2 Everyone entering a HPAI suspect farm must wear proper protective clothing, including gumboots, overalls, gloves and face masks.
- 1.3 The following samples must be collected by a veterinarian (private or state) for PCR and virus isolation:
 - 1.3.1 From dead or killed birds:
 - i) Prioritise spleen and caecal tonsil samples but other internal organ samples may also be taken;
 - ii) Tracheal and cloacal swabs
 - 1.3.2 From live birds:
 - i) Tracheal and cloacal swabs
 - ii) 60 samples should be collected from each epidemiological unit;
 - iii) NO serological samples should be collected from birds showing clinical signs as the birds from the current outbreak die prior to having seroconverted;
- 1.4 Use plastic swabs (not wooden, as it could contain PCR inhibitors) and place the swabs in 2 to 5ml sterile PBS;

- 1.5 Organ samples should be placed in clean containers and the outside surface of the containers must be disinfected;
- 1.6 All samples must be sent on ice (4°C) and must be packaged in triple packaging in compliance with the Regulations of the National Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act No 93 of 1996);
- 1.7 All samples must be submitted to the ARC-OVI and copies of the sample submission form must be sent to epidemiology@daff.gov.za for approval of payment;
- 1.8 Any person leaving the affected farm must shower out (or shower as soon as possible if no shower is available on the premises). As far as possible, the protective clothing must remain on the affected farm and be cleaned and disinfected or destroyed after use. If the veterinarian provided his/her own protective clothing, this must be taken off on leaving the farm, placed in double packaging and disinfected as soon as possible by complete immersion in disinfectant.
- 1.9 After having visited a farm where birds with clinical signs are present, the veterinary team(s) that were present at this property is/are then regarded as contaminated and should refrain from visiting other farms within a 48 hour period;
- 1.10 Although no human cases of H5N8 have been reported to date, despite the global occurrence of outbreaks, there is still a potential zoonotic risk and hence it is essential that the necessary protective clothing be worn when handling any diseased birds.

2. HPAI confirmed farm

- 2.1 Quarantine and a complete standstill must be instituted on the movement of poultry and poultry products, where nothing enters the farm and nothing leaves;
- 2.2 Tracing:
 - 2.2.1 Full trace back and forward commencing from at least the last 21 days prior to the date of outbreak;
 - 2.2.2 Trace back must include investigation of in contact workers and the possible subsequent contact they may have had with poultry outside of the index farm;
 - 2.2.3 Trace back must include scrutiny of the visitors list and subsequent contact they may have had with poultry outside of the index farm;
 - 2.2.4 All suspicious premises traced must be placed under immediate quarantine;
- 2.3 Personnel:
 - 2.3.1 A limited number of personnel should have contact with infected birds;
 - 2.3.2 Ideally, designated personnel should be assigned to the affected house/site/premises;
 - 2.3.3 Where possible, personnel in contact with infected birds should reside on site;
 - 2.3.4 All in contact personnel must refrain from contact with poultry for at least 48 hours following their last exposure to infected animals;

- 2.4 Biosecurity:
 - 2.4.1 All in contact personnel must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment;
 - 2.4.2 This should include a full body suits over designated overalls, boots and protective face masks;
 - 2.4.3 Overalls and boots must be cleaned, disinfected and washed onsite.

3. Poultry farms in the 3 km zone of a HPAI confirmed farm

- 3.1 State veterinary officials should urgently identify all poultry farms and prioritise as follows (in this order):
 - 3.1.1 large commercial operations;
 - 3.1.2 small and upcoming commercial operations; and
 - 3.1.3 properties where only a few birds are being kept;
- 3.2 For each of the above properties, the following information should be collected and regular reports containing the findings be submitted to DAFF at epidemiology@daff.gov.za:
 - 3.2.1 Census data including number of birds and type of birds;
 - 3.2.2 Accurate GPS co-ordinates;
 - 3.2.3 Findings of evaluation for clinical signs
- 3.3 Increased surveillance must continue on these farms until the quarantine on the index farm has been lifted.
- 3.4 Poultry and poultry products may only move with a permit if there are no clinical signs suggestive of the disease
- 3.5 Slaughter may only take place at abattoirs that are NOT approved for export purposes.

4. Poultry farms in the 30 km zone of a HPAI confirmed farm

- 4.1 State veterinary officials to urgently identify all poultry farms and prioritise as follows (in this order):
 - 4.1.1 large commercial operations;
 - 4.1.2 small and upcoming commercial operations; and
 - 4.1.3 properties where only a few birds are being kept.
- 4.2 For each of the above properties, the following information should be collected and reports containing the findings be submitted to DAFF at epidemiology@daff.gov.za:
 - 4.2.1 Census data including number of birds and type of birds;
 - 4.2.2 Accurate GPS co-ordinates;
 - 4.2.3 Findings of evaluation for clinical signs

5. Poultry farms in the rest of the country

- 5.1 No increased avian influenza serological surveillance is required. It is however empirical that there is strict compliance with the required routine 6 monthly surveillance for chickens and 6 monthly, pre- and post-movement surveillance for ostriches;

- 5.2 We need state veterinary officials to urgently identify all poultry operations or properties where poultry is being kept and prioritise as follows (in this order):
- 5.2.1 large commercial operations;
 - 5.2.2 small and upcoming commercial operations; and
 - 5.2.3 properties where only a few birds are being kept;
- 5.3 For each of the above properties, the following information should be collected and reports submitted to DAFF at epidemiology@daff.gov.za:
- 5.3.1 Census data including number of birds and type of birds;
 - 5.3.2 Accurate GPS co-ordinates;
 - 5.3.3 Enquiry about potential clinical signs / mortalities on property;
- 5.4 The public should be sensitised to the fact that they should report any suspected cases or increased mortalities amongst poultry to the state veterinary office immediately.

6. General Biosecurity

- 6.1 Different staff should be used for the HPAI confirmed farm, farms within the 3km radius of a HPAI confirmed farm, and farms within the 3km radius of a HPAI confirmed farm;
- 6.2 It is preferable to use overalls and gumboots that are available at the farms that are being visited and that officials shower out prior to leaving farms;
- 6.3 In the event where farms don't have overalls and gumboots available, all clothing (overalls and gumboots) must be cleaned and double bagged prior to leaving the farm. The clothing should then be immersed in disinfectant prior to washing;
- 6.4 General ban on the sale of live spent hens across the country until further notice.

7. Poultry compartments and the registration of compartments in terms of VPN 44.2012-01 Standard for the inspection of poultry farms for export

- 7.1 No applications for registration of new (not previously registered) poultry establishments in terms of VPN 44.2012-01 Standard for the inspection of poultry farms for export will be accepted.
- 7.2 Establishments that are already registered in terms of VPN 44.2012-01 may apply for re-registration as per normal.
- 7.3 State veterinarians that have visited a farm affected by HPAI or suspected to be affected by HPAI are requested not to enter compartments for inspections for annual re-registration. In such cases the inspection must be delegated to another official. In the instance that another official is not available a private veterinarian may be authorised to handle the inspection.

8. Export of heat treated ostrich meat

- 8.1 The export of heat treated ostrich meat may continue from farms "where within a 10km radius, including, where appropriate, the territory of a neighbouring country, there has been no outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza or Newcastle disease for at least the previous 30 days", which test

serologically negative for avian influenza within 21 days prior to slaughter according to the prescripts of the ostrich VPN04/2012-01 (Revision 6.0).

- 8.2 Should a compartment test positive on ELISA but negative on HI prior to slaughter, this compartment must be re-sampled at the intensified sampling rate of 60 samples per epidemiological group and only once these also yield negative results for HI H5 and H7 may ostriches be slaughtered for the export of heat treated meat.

9. Export of poultry products

- 9.1 Trade partners require certification of country freedom from HPAI for the export of fresh meat from poultry as well as exports of live poultry and hatching eggs and poultry products, (unless the product has been subject to a process to inactivate avian influenza viruses, in terms of Chapter 10.4 of the OIE Code on avian influenza viruses), which we cannot currently provide. However, fresh meat from poultry as well as exports of live poultry and hatching eggs and poultry products sourced from a registered avian influenza free compartment (in terms of VPN 44.2012-01 (Standard for the inspection of poultry farms for export and in line with Chapter 10.4 of the OIE Code) are being negotiated with trade partners and can be exported if the import requirements can be met. The client has to get the latest import permit.

- 9.2 Compartments which fall within the 3 km radius of the affected farm, should please contact DAFF.

- 9.3 It is necessary for the exporter to confirm with the importer whether the importing country will still allow importation of non-poultry birds, and whether the import requirements may have changed

10. Export of birds – non-poultry (commercial or as pets) and other bird products

- 10.1 It is necessary for the exporter to confirm with the importer whether the importing country will still allow importation of non-poultry birds, and whether the import requirements may have changed.

We will greatly appreciate your assistance in distributing this information to all state veterinary officials and thank our colleagues in advance for their support.

Kind regards



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DIRECTOR ANIMAL HEALTH

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