

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 1 December 2023

Australia – New Zealand biosecurity cooperation (ANZBC) meeting: On 6-7 December there is an annual Australian/ NZ Biosecurity Cooperation (ANZBC) meeting with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), in Auckland at the MPI offices.

Dr Chris Locke (Deputy Secretary, DAFF), Stuart Anderson (Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand) and officials meet annually to ensure regional cooperation, strengthen our biosecurity systems, and boost trade.

Alongside standing operational and technical working group meetings, the bilateral discussions cover other areas of collaboration with Australia, including preparedness for Foot and Mouth disease (FMD), Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), and Lumpy Skin disease (LSD).

We will also discuss Pacific cooperation and biofouling of vessels.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 8 December 2023

Highly-pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI): MPI was notified Friday afternoon 24 November of two dead skuas found by McMurdo field staff on an inaccessible island within the Ross Archipelago (off Ross Island, near Scott Base). Adverse weather prevented sampling and further information gathering until 28 November. Testing at MPI's Animal Health Laboratory were Negative for influenza A by PCR on 5 December.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 1 March 2024

Detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) on Antarctic Peninsula: On 26 February HPAI was confirmed from samples collected from Skuas (migratory seabirds) on the Antarctic peninsula near Argentine research station 'Primavera'. This is the first time that the disease has been detected on the Antarctic continent. It is likely to spread to other regions within the continent, but it is unknown how quickly this will occur due to the novel environment and a likely wider range of species involved. During the Antarctic winter season, the ability to monitor spread will reduce as fewer people will remain on the ice. Biosecurity New Zealand is monitoring closely and is in communication with MFAT, the Department of Conservation, the Ministry of Health and Antarctica NZ.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 22 March 2024

Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Readiness: the first meeting of MPI's Chief Veterinary Officer High-Level Advisory Group for HPAI was held on Friday 8 March. Membership is made up of John Russell, General Manager at Tegel Foods, David Hayman, Professor of Infectious Disease Ecology at Massey University, and David Murdoch, Professor of Infectious Disease at University of Otago. This group will provide ongoing advice and direction prior to, and during, any outbreak of HPAI.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is currently undertaking a trial to understand safety and efficacy of vaccination on individuals of five critically endangered species that rely on captive breeding to avoid species extinction. The vaccine being used (Poulvac Flufend) is an inactivated (killed) vaccine made from a strain of low pathogenicity avian influenza. As of mid-March 2024, all species have received one vaccination (with some individuals having received two). There have been no reported adverse reactions. The use of an avian influenza vaccine in New Zealand for any purpose outside of this trial remains prohibited. On Friday 15 March, MPI met with poultry industry Chief Executives to discuss the DOC Avian Influenza vaccine efficacy and safety trial. Attendees included the Chief Executives of Tegel, Cobb Genetics, Bromley Park Hatcheries and Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand. Discussions focussed on the reason for the trial work and how this affects certification for exports. It is the view of MPI that the trial does not impact on certification.

On Wednesday 13 March, MPI presented at Australian Animal Health Committee Forum, which includes the Chief Veterinary Officers from Australia (both state and

federal level). Australian states shared information on their preparedness, and lessons learnt from Victoria's HPAI incursion in 2020. Officials from MPI will seek more detailed information from counterparts in Victoria to understand more about their response efforts. MPI continues to engage with OneHealth partners (Department of Conservation and Ministry of Health) on the readiness effort, to ensure alignment across agencies. Further engagement with Regional Councils and stakeholder groups is ongoing. A detailed update on HPAI readiness and response measures will be with your office in early April.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 5 April 2024

Recent Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) infections in US livestock: In the last week, five US states have confirmed HPAI on dairy farms (Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Idaho and Michigan). Farmers reported mainly older cows were affected, showing low appetite and greatly reduced milk production. Up to 20 percent of animals on the farms have been infected. The animals typically recover in seven to ten days. Sequencing of the virus is underway, with the current global circulating strain confirmed in Kansas and Texas, with a further suspect positive in Michigan. Wild birds are believed to be the source of the infection, and dead birds have been found on the infected properties (except for Michigan, who imported cattle from Texas). One human case has been reported in Texas as a cattle-to-human transmission, a farm worker who had high exposure to cattle on the farm. The patient is showing symptoms consistent with conjunctivitis and is recovering. This is the second human case in the United States in the past two years.

Affected farmers are undertaking biosecurity measures including reducing access of wild birds to farm feed and water points and ensuring that these are clean. The United States Department of Agriculture has stressed that there is no evidence of transmission from cow-to-cow, however given cow-to-human transmission has occurred, there is a chance cow-to-cow transmission is occurring.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has not indicated that there are any plans to cull infected animals or herds and does not believe there are public health considerations as milk pasteurisation kills the virus. However, they have issued caution over the sale and consumption of raw milk and raw milk cheese products, due to the limited information currently known about the transmission of HPAI A (H5N1) viruses in raw milk. The United States is asking that World Organisation of Animal Health standards are followed and that there is no need to impose trade restrictions on US product as a result of these detections.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 3 May 2024

New Field App Developed in Preparation for High Pathogen Avian Influenza (HPAI): MPI have developed an app to easily collect sample data in the field, in case of a potential outbreak of HPAI. This app has been trialled by select panel providers with positive feedback received. This app is ready to use and will remove the need for paper forms, enabling data to be collected for mass sampling events and sent to our geospatial database in real-time. This is the first step in overhauling our dataflows in preparation for an HPAI outbreak, which we will also be able to use as a template for other animal biosecurity responses.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 14 June 2024

Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI): On Tuesday 4 June, MPI's Director-General met with Chief Executives of the poultry and egg laying industry bodies. Discussions were aimed at ensuring industry readiness and resilience, with key actions taken away by both industry and MPI. This will be a monthly meeting going forward. MPI is holding a briefing session next week for Industry CEs and representatives to provide background on disease management options, an update on Operational Plans, and outline activity needed to update industry planning. Further workshops are planned to build on prior industry engagement. A study tour to the UK for officials and industry

representatives is being arranged to learn about farm-level measures that have proved successful to protect poultry from spillover from wild birds.

Australia is responding to a localised outbreak of HPAI, but not the current globally circulating strain of concern (strain 2.3.4.4.b detected in Antarctica). Emergence of HPAI in commercial poultry following the recombination of low pathogenic strains is consistent with the long-understood epidemiology of HPAI. This is unrelated to the strain that spilled over and established in wildlife in 2020. As of 7 June, five poultry farms in Victoria have been confirmed as infected. The strains on four farms are H7N3, one is H7N9. Agriculture Victoria is providing support and movement restrictions are in place to reduce spread. Western Australia also has a farm with a low pathogenic subtype (H9N2) which is being managed, unrelated to the Victoria outbreaks. While New Zealand imports several poultry products from Australia, there are measures included in Import Health Standards to manage the risk from avian influenza. Additionally, a clause has been added to the Egg Products Import Health Standard (IHS) which requires all consignments of egg powder and liquid egg originating from Victoria to be assessed at the time of entry by Biosecurity New Zealand. Updates from colleagues in the US continue where raw milk has proved able to infect mice in laboratory studies and research is continuing into mRNA vaccination technology for humans and cattle. Initial testing of milk in Canada and the UK has returned negative results for HPAI.

Weekly update for the week ending Friday 9 August 2024

Indonesia Certification Update: Following a period of sustained engagement, Indonesia has now agreed to update the New Zealand rendered meal export certificate, to remove an unnecessary Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) country freedom statement. This change is necessary to maintain trade to Indonesia in the event HPAI arrives in New Zealand. Indonesia is our main market for mixed species inedible rendered meals, with exports valued at \$87 million in 2023. 9(2)(d)

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Weekly update for the week ending Friday 30 August 2024

High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) Biosecurity NZ is developing its response plan with fresh input from a recent trip to the United Kingdom (UK) where they met with official counterparts and other key organisations involved in the UK response, including regulators, the British Poultry Council, and the British Egg Industry Council. AIS Response and On Farm Support are connected to this work. Civil Defence groups within NZ have requested information from MPI on the potential support they may need to provide, particularly in the welfare function. AIS Response engaged with the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management group this week and shared public facing MPI information.