

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Germany

Post: Berlin

First H5N8 outbreak in Europe

Report Categories:

Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

Germany has reported an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) of the subtype H5N8 in fattening turkeys in North East Germany (Mecklenburg Western Pomerania) on Nov, 5 2014. The veterinary authorities placed the infected holding immediately under restrictions.

General Information:

Germany has reported an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) of the subtype H5N8 in fattening turkeys in North East Germany (Mecklenburg Western Pomerania) on Nov, 5 2014. The holding keeps approximately 31,000 fattening turkeys and increased mortality was observed in one of the six sheds of 15 week old birds.

The veterinary authorities placed the infected holding immediately under restrictions as of Nov 4, 2014. According to Directive 2005/94/EC on the control of avian influenza a 3km radius protection zone and a 10km surveillance zone were established around the outbreak holding. In addition to the killing of all poultry present in the infected holding, also all poultry present in the holdings situated in the protection zone is being culled and disposed of. The risk zone has a radius of 50km. Here, all poultry need to be kept indoors.

The restrictions for the protection zone will be lifted December 1, 2014 earliest. The protection zone will then be converted to the surveillance zone for 30 days. The current restrictions in the surveillance zone can be lifted at the earliest December 10, 2014. The same applies to the risk area (50 km). Clinical investigations in poultry holdings in the surveillance zone were initiated. Since the identification of H5N8 a total of 1,100 samples were taken. All tests were negative except the ones from the infected holding. The possible cause for virus entry into the turkey holding is not yet known.

Germany has informed that according to present knowledge no live poultry or poultry meat has been dispatched to other federal states, other Member States or to third countries from the concerned areas. In 2013, Germany produced 463,000 metric tons of turkey meat and exported nearly 139,000 metric tons of turkey meat. The majority is exported to the EU common market and there are no turkey meat exports to the United States. So far, there have been no trade restrictions imposed by other countries.

This is the first detection of the subtype H5N8 in Germany and the rest of Europe. There have been detections of H5N8 in the Eurasian region such as China, Japan and South Korea in both poultry production facilities and wild birds. The source of the outbreak is still unknown. Autumn is a time with high wild bird migration especially waterfowl. There is an increased risk of incursion of avian influenza into the poultry sector through direct and indirect contact with wild birds.