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Status of Bird Flu Outbreaks in The Netherlands

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Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

On November 26, 2016, High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) of the type H5N8 was detected at a commercial duck farm. On December 1, HPAI was found at two other duck farms in the same village.

In total, about 207,000 ducks have been culled at eight duck farms. The most significant economic impact is the closure of the South African market, which represents an annual export value of about \$100 million of frozen broiler cuts.

High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) of the type H5N8 was detected in dead wild waterfowl at several locations, and on a swan, duck and chicken hobby farm in the Netherlands. On November 26, 2016, HPAI was detected at a commercial duck farm in Biddinghuizen, located in the center of the Netherlands (Province of Flevoland). The ducks at this farm, four other farms of the same company, and at a nearby farm have been culled. On December 1, HPAI was detected at two other duck farms in Biddinghuizen and ducks from these farms have also been culled. In total, about 207,000 ducks have been slaughtered.

Regional measures

The farms are located about 30 miles north from the main poultry meat and egg producing region in the Netherlands, which is situated around the city of Barneveld (Province of Gelderland). The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has prohibited the transport of poultry, eggs, poultry manure in an area about 10 miles around Biddinghuizen. See the map below:

<http://www.rvo.nl/dierziektenecrisis/index.html>

The map shows the section in which the transport restrictions are imposed and the corridors for transport to two slaughterhouses. These two slaughterhouses received permission to restart their operation, but they can only slaughter poultry from outside the section, transported over a designated road.

National measures

Transport of ducks and turkeys is only allowed after inspection by a veterinarian. The government states that turkeys are more receptive to the virus than broilers. Commercial poultry farms are required to keep their animals inside. It should be noted that the ducks at the culled farms were also held indoors. One of the suspected sources of the virus is reportedly the litter which is used on the duck farms. Other measures include prohibition of bird shows and hunting at or near sites with large populations of waterfowl.

Economic impact

The Netherlands exports annually about 1.2 million metric tons of broiler meat (with a value of \$2.9 billion), of which almost a third of the volume is shipped to third countries. The most important third country export destinations are South Africa, Philippines, Ghana, Benin, Hong Kong and Malaysia. The Netherlands exports annually about \$1.0 billion worth of eggs and egg products, of which almost a quarter is shipped to third countries. The most important third country export destinations are Russia (predominantly breeding eggs), Switzerland, the United States and Japan. Considering the bans listed below, by far the main export restriction is imposed by South Africa. In 2015, the Netherlands exported 78,000 metric tons of broiler meat to South Africa, with a value of \$81 million. During the first eight months of 2016, exports rose significantly and totaled 75,000 metric tons (\$69 million). Almost all of the exported product is frozen and consist of mainly halves, quarters, legs, backs, necks, and wings.

List of Current HPAI-Introduced Bans

Of the main export destinations, the NVWA reports import restrictions on poultry and poultry products imposed by South Africa, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Russia, the United States and Japan (see below). The NVWA reports no import restrictions for the Philippines, Ghana, Benin and Switzerland.

-South Africa: Live poultry, poultry meat (slaughtered after 11/4/16), egg products (produced after 11/4/16), eggs, and other poultry products which did not receive a heat treatment. Poultry products which received a heat treatment can still be exported.

-Hong Kong: Live poultry, meat and eggs which are produced in the Provinces of Friesland, Flevoland and North Brabant.

-Malaysia: Live poultry and eggs.

-Russia: Poultry meat and unheated poultry products. No ban has been imposed on breeding eggs and chicks produced outside the affected region.

-United States: Live poultry and birds, breeding eggs, poultry meat and poultry meat products from, or transported through the affected region.

-Japan: Table eggs, poultry (including chicks), poultry meat and poultry meat products. No ban has been imposed for albumin or egg products produced after 7/31/12.

Conclusion

While in the Netherlands the outbreaks of HPAI in commercial poultry flocks have been limited to the three duck farms, the Dutch government and poultry sector are quite concerned about the possibility of the virus moving to the main poultry meat and egg production region about 30 miles south of the current findings.

In 2003, the HPAI virus type H7N7 significantly affected the commercial poultry production in the Netherlands. The virus was detected at 255 farms, and at 1,094 farms about 30.7 million birds were culled. Dutch broiler meat production was cut by about 200,000 metric tons, and annual exports to third countries were cut by about 50,000 metric tons (\$30 million) annually during four years.

Exports of egg products were only affected for one year, shipments to third countries were reduced by about \$35 million. Exports of breeding eggs were affected during a longer period, with an annual cut of exports to third countries of about \$30 million during three years. Based on the above trade figures the loss of third country export markets was estimated at about \$250 million. The government counted 453 people with health problems related to the virus, which was detected in 89 people, and one person died of pneumonia.

Eleven years later, in 2014, HPAI of the type H5N8 was found at five commercial poultry farms in the

Netherlands. Because of timely culling and transport restrictions further outbreaks were prevented, and the economic impact was only a fraction compared to the outbreaks in 2003 (based on conclusion of the [Evaluation Report Bird Flu](#), Dutch language).

In 2016, the economic impact is mainly caused by the closure of the South African market for frozen broiler cuts. Generally, it takes at least three months to regain the status to export after a ban for HPAI has been put in place. For the short term, if no other detections are found, it is expected that the majority of the product will be stored and/or redirected to other markets. Only long term and massive closure of major third country export markets will negatively affect broiler meat production and exports.