



MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE LA PÊCHE
(Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries)

General Directorate for Food

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**NOTIFICATION: A CASE OF LOW PATHOGENIC AVIAN
INFLUENZA IN FRANCE**

in La Garnache (Vendée *département*, 85)

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION as of February 4, 2009 4:00 pm

**Report by Dr. Monique Eloit,
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Map: Location of outbreak (46.89°N; 1.88°W)

Introduction

Suspicion of avian influenza was reported in the morning of January 30, 2009 in a farm of approximately 5,000 breeding ducks in the town of La Garnache (postal code 85710), located in the Vendée *département* (85) on the border of the Loire-Atlantique *département* (44). The low pathogenic nature of the avian influenza virus, subtype H5 non-N1, was confirmed on February 1, 2009. This is the first case of low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) confirmed in France since obligatory reporting to the European Commission and the World Organization for Animal Health (or OIE) has been in place.

Successive laboratory results led the French authorities to notify the European Commission and the OIE of an LPAI outbreak on February 2, 2009 in a farm in La Garnache, located in the Vendée (85).

As soon as the outbreak was confirmed, on February 1, 2009, all birds in the infected farm were slaughtered.

1. Timeline

Date	Chain of events and testing
Evening of Thursday, January 29	* Signs of prostration accompanied by mortality (50 bird deaths)
Morning of Friday, January 30	*35 additional bird deaths discovered *Prefectoral monitoring decree (Arrêté préfectoral de mise sous surveillance, or APMS) applicable to the farm located in La Garnache (85710) (ban on movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into or out of the farm) *Swabbing for PCR assay
Afternoon of Friday, January 30	*Swab samples sent to laboratory for testing (<i>Institut Départementale d'Analyse et de Conseil</i> , or IDAC, a public laboratory serving the Loire Atlantique (44) area)
Evening of Friday, January 30	*Test results: PCR M+ and PCR H5+
Morning of Saturday, January 31	*15 additional bird deaths discovered *Swab samples sent to national reference laboratory for confirmation of initial diagnosis
Afternoon of Saturday, January 31	* H5 subtype confirmed but no evidence of the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus (Qinghai strain, clade 2.2) > <i>Outbreak of H5 subtype avian influenza diagnosed</i> *Infection declared by prefectoral decree applicable to the farm located in La Garnache (85710) *A restricted zone with a 10 km radius was set up around the infected farm (movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products restricted) *Decision to proceed with precautionary slaughter all birds in the infected farm
Sunday February 1	*The national reference laboratory indicates the presence of a cleavage pattern common in low pathogenic H5 strains > <i>Outbreak of H5 non-N1 low pathogenic avian influenza diagnosed</i> *All birds in the infected farm slaughtered on-site and preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations carried out *Restricted zone is reduced to a 1 km radius around the farm *Survey of all farms in the restricted zone (only one farm is located in the zone; it raises fattening (" <i>prêt-à-gaver</i> " ducks)
Monday February 2	*European Commission is notified of the outbreak of LPAI in France at the La Garnache farm * OIE is notified of the outbreak of LPAI in France at the La Garnache farm *Health visit to the farm located in the restricted zone: no clinical signs
Tuesday February 3	*Cleaning and disinfection operations pursued in the infected farm
Wednesday February 4	* N is identified by PCR assay: H5N3 subtype avian influenza virus
Upcoming actions	*Cleaning and disinfection operations concluded in the infected farm; no restocking has been scheduled

2. Control measures taken in France

2.1. All movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into or out of the infected farm has been strictly forbidden since January 30 (Prefectoral monitoring decree for the La Garnache farm).

2.2. All movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products has been restricted:

*within a restricted zone with a 10 km radius around the farm from January 31, 2009 to February 1, 2009 (Prefectoral decree declaring infection in the la Garnache farm)

*within a zone with a 1 km radius around the LPAI outbreak effective February 1, 2009 (Evidence of low pathogenic nature of avian influenza virus confirmed)

2.3. All birds in the infected farm were slaughtered on February 1, 2009. Preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations were carried out on February 1, 2009.

2.4. The health authorities surveyed all farms located in the restricted zone with 1 km radius around the infected farm. Only one farm is located in this zone. Since January 31, 2009, all movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into and out of this farm has been forbidden or restricted. The preliminary epidemiological survey included a health visit to this farm by a veterinarian on Monday, February 2; this visit did not reveal any warning signs or raise any suspicion.

3. Epidemiological study

The precise origins of the disease are not yet known; the epidemiological study is underway. The epidemiological study has nonetheless already established that no eggs or birds entered or exited the infected farm in the past 21 days, which comprise the risk period for virus excretion.

4. Observations

Every protective measure was taken upon suspicion of the infection on January 30, 2009 (reinforced bio-safety measures, restrictions on the movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products). All birds present on the infected farm were slaughtered on-site on February 1, 2009. Preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations were begun as soon as the slaughtering had been completed.

Furthermore, the epidemiological study has shown that no poultry product was placed on the French market, exchanged, or exported during the 21-day risk period preceding suspicion of the disease. The health visit carried out that day on the only farm located in the restricted zone did not give rise to any suspicion that the disease had spread; however, the absence of viral carriage shall be confirmed with test results from the samples taken from the farm in question.

If future health visits and test results produce favorable results, all restrictions will be definitively lifted 21 days after the start of cleaning and disinfection operations, in compliance with EC law. If there is no further outbreak of LPAI, France will recover its avian influenza-free status 90 days following the conclusion of cleaning and disinfection operations.