



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

General Directorate for Food

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**LOW PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA IN FRANCE:
CURRENT SITUATION**
Investigations related to the event have been completed

Outbreaks in La Garnache (Vendée *département*, 85)

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION as of February 12, 2009, 6:00 pm

**Report by Dr. Monique Eloit,
Deputy Director General for Food, CVO**



Map 1: Location of outbreaks in France (*Outbreak 1: 46.89°N; 1.88°W*
Outbreak 2: 46.89°N; 1.87°W)



Map 2: Local map with outbreaks and restricted zones

Introduction

A suspicion of avian influenza was made on 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 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 enforced. Successive laboratory results led the French authorities to notify the European Commission and the OIE of an outbreak of LPAI (subtype H5N3) on February 2, 2009, in the La Garnache farm, located in the Vendée (85). A stamping out of all poultry in the infected farm was performed on February 1, 2009, as soon as the outbreak was confirmed.

An inventory of all poultry farms located within a 1 km radius zone around the outbreak was made in the framework of the epidemiological study. A single farm with 5,000 fattening ducks was identified. A sanitary inspection of this farm revealed no evidence of clinical signs that might raise suspicion that the disease had spread. However, laboratory testing of samples taken from the farm identified a LPAI subtype H5N3 virus identical to the one found in the first outbreak. A stamping out of all poultry in the second infected farm was performed on February 9, 2009, as soon as the outbreak was confirmed. The European Commission and the OIE were notified of this second LPAI outbreak, linked to the first, on Tuesday, February 10, 2009.

Poultry farms located within a 1 km radius of the second outbreak were surveyed during the epidemiological study, and another farm with 4,300 chickens was identified. **Laboratory testing of samples taken from this new farm has shown no evidence of avian influenza. Thus, no new outbreaks of avian influenza have been diagnosed in France.**

Hereafter, the farm in which the first LPAI outbreak (Outbreak 1) was diagnosed will be referred to as "Farm no. 1," and the farm in which the second LPAI outbreak (Outbreak 2) was diagnosed will be referred to as "Farm no. 2." The other farm located in the restricted zone for Outbreak 2 will be referred to as "Farm no. 3."

1. Timeline

Date	Chain of events and testing
Thursday, January 29	* Signs of prostration accompanied by mortality (50 bird deaths) in Farm no. 1
Friday, January 30	*35 additional bird deaths discovered * Prefectoral monitoring decree (<i>Arrêté préfectoral de mise sous surveillance</i> , or APMS) applicable to Farm no. 1 (ban on movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into or out of the farm) *Samples taken (swabbing for PCR assay) and sent to laboratory for screening tests (<i>Institut Départementale d'Analyse et de Conseil</i> , or IDAC 44, a public laboratory serving the Loire Atlantique (44) area) >> Screening test results: PCR M+ and PCR H5+
Saturday, January 31	*15 additional bird deaths discovered * Samples sent to national reference laboratory for confirmation of initial diagnosis >> Test results from national reference laboratory: H5 subtype confirmed but no evidence of highly pathogenic H5N1 virus (Qinghai strain, clade 2.2) > Outbreak of H5 subtype avian influenza diagnosed * Infection declared by prefectoral decree (<i>Arrêté préfectoral de déclaration d'infection</i> , or APDI) applicable to Farm no. 1 * A restricted zone with a 10 km radius is set up around Farm no. 1 (movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products restricted)

Sunday, February 1	<p>* The national reference laboratory indicates the presence of a cleavage pattern common in low pathogenic H5 strains</p> <p>> Outbreak of H5 non-N1 low pathogenic avian influenza diagnosed</p> <p>* On-site stamping out of all poultry of Farm no. 1, and preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations carried out</p> <p>* Restricted zone is reduced to a 1 km radius around Outbreak 1</p> <p>* Survey of all farms in the restricted zone (only one farm, Farm no. 2, is located in the zone)</p>
Monday, February 2	<p>*European Commission is notified of LPAI Outbreak 1</p> <p>*The OIE is notified of LPAI Outbreak 1</p> <p>*Health visit to Farm no. 2, located in the restricted zone for Farm no. 1: no clinical signs</p>
Tuesday, February 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaning and disinfection operations continue in Farm no. 1
Wednesday, February 4	<p>* N is identified by PCR assay: N3</p> <p>> Diagnosis of an outbreak of H5N3 subtype avian influenza virus</p> <p>*Swabbing and blood samples taken in Farm no. 2 and sent to IDAC 44 laboratory for screening tests</p>
Thursday, February 5	<p>>>Screening test results: PCR H5+</p>
Friday, February 6	<p>*Samples from Farm no. 2 sent to national reference laboratory to confirm initial diagnosis</p> <p>>> Test results from national laboratory: PCR H5+; PCR N3+; PCR H5HP Qinghai strain negative</p> <p>*As Farm no. 2 is already located in a restricted zone, the zone is widened to create a second restricted zone with 1 km radius around Farm no. 2 (NB: the two restricted zones overlap; see Map 2).</p>
Monday, February 9	<p>* Infection declared by prefectural decree (APDI) applicable to Farm no. 2</p> <p>* All birds in Farm no. 2 slaughtered on-site, and preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations carried out</p> <p>* The national reference laboratory indicates the presence of a cleavage pattern common in low pathogenic H5 strains</p> <p>> <i>Diagnosis confirmed of a second outbreak of LPAI H5N3 (sequences of this virus strain's genetic fragments are identical to those of the virus in the first outbreak)</i></p>
Tuesday, February 10	<p>* The European Commission is notified of LPAI Outbreak 2, linked to Outbreak 1</p> <p>*OIE is notified of LPAI Outbreak 2, linked to Outbreak 1</p>
Wednesday, February 11	<p>*Survey of farms in the restricted area</p> <p>*Health visit</p> <p>*Samples taken and sent to IDAC 44 laboratory for screening tests</p>
Thursday, February 12	<p>>>Screening test results: <u>PCR H5 negative</u></p>
Actions underway or to come	<p>*Cleaning and disinfection operations in Farm nos. 1 and 2 continued and concluded</p>

2. Control measures taken in France

1 *Outbreak 1 – Breeding duck farm:*

1.1 All movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into or out of Farm no. 1 has been strictly forbidden since January 30, 2009 (prefectoral monitoring decree for Farm no. 1).

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

* within a restricted zone with a 10 km radius around Farm no. 1 from January 31, 2009, to February 1, 2009 (prefectoral decree declaring infection applicable to Farm no. 1);

* 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).

1.3 All birds in Farm no. 1 were slaughtered on February 1, 2009. Preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations were carried out on February 1, 2009, as soon as the slaughter was completed.

1.4 The health authorities surveyed all farms located in the restricted zone with 1 km radius around Farm no. 1. Only one farm is located in this zone, a fattening duck farm (Farm no. 2). Since January 31, 2009, all movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into and out of Farm no. 2 has been banned 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. Samples were taken in Farm no. 2 and sent to the laboratory for testing on Wednesday, February 4.

2 *Outbreak 2 – Fattening duck farm:*

2.1 All movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into or out of Farm no. 2 has been strictly monitored since January 31, 2009; this was reinforced Monday, February 9, 2009 (prefectoral decree declaring infection, or APDI, applicable to Farm no. 2).

2.2 All movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products in a zone with 1 km radius around Farm no. 2 has been restricted since February 9, 2009 (prefectoral decree declaring infection, or APDI, applicable to Farm no. 2).

2.3 All birds in Farm no. 2 were slaughtered on February 9, 2009. Preliminary cleaning and disinfection operations were carried out immediately following the slaughter on February 9, 2009.

2.4 The health authorities surveyed all farms located in the restricted zone with 1 km radius around Farm no. 2. One other farm (Farm no. 3) was located in this zone. It raises broiler chickens. Since February 9, 2009, all movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products into and out of Farm no. 3 has been banned or restricted.

The preliminary epidemiological study included a health visit by a veterinarian to Farm no. 3; the visit did not reveal any warning signs or raise any suspicion. Samples were taken from Farm no. 3 for testing and sent to the laboratory on Wednesday, February 11.

3. Epidemiological study

The precise origin of the disease in both of the two outbreaks is not yet known; the epidemiological study is still underway.

The epidemiological studies following the two LPAI outbreaks did not, however, give rise to supplementary investigations of farms located outside of the restricted zones declared around the two outbreaks.

4. Observations

Two outbreaks of LPAI subtype H5N3 have been diagnosed in France. **The first outbreak was diagnosed within the framework of the country's nationwide passive surveillance program**; investigation of the only other farm located in the restricted zone declared around Outbreak 1 revealed the second outbreak, which had an epidemiological link to the first (geographical proximity).

Every protective measure was taken in the infected farms (reinforced bio-safety measures, restrictions on the movement of poultry, poultry products, and poultry sub-products) as soon as there was any suspicion of infection. Since Farm no. 2 is located in the restricted zone for the first outbreak, all protective measures were effective in both farms, starting on January 30, 2009, for Farm no. 1, and on January 31, 2009, for Farm no. 2. All birds in both farms were slaughtered on February 1, 2009, and February 9, 2009, respectively. In both farms, cleaning and disinfection operations began as soon as the slaughter was completed.

The epidemiological studies have shown that no at-risk poultry product from Farm no. 1 was offered for sale on the French market, exchanged, or exported during the 21-day risk period preceding suspicion of the disease. Furthermore, the epidemiological studies carried out in Farm no. 2 led to no supplementary investigations of facilities located outside the restricted zone declared around Outbreak 2.

Finally, laboratory tests for avian influenza virus of samples taken from the regulatory zone around Outbreak 2 were negative. **Thus, no new outbreak of avian influenza has been diagnosed in France.**

All restrictions will be definitively lifted on March 2, 2009, 21 days after the start of cleaning and disinfection operations in Farm no. 2, in compliance with EC law. If there is no further outbreak of LPAI, France will recover its avian influenza-free status 90 days after the conclusion of cleaning and disinfection operations in the two farms.

5. Conclusion

Tests on samples taken from the restricted zone with 1 km radius around the second outbreak were negative. Furthermore, epidemiological studies did not lead to supplementary investigations outside this restricted zone. **This concludes all investigations regarding this event.**