

## **Advice from the County Council on Avian Influenza H5N1 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

This document sets out the County Council's current position on Avian Influenza and issues which District, Parish and Town Councils may wish to consider.

### **The Disease**

Avian influenza (AI) is a disease of birds, not humans. People can become infected but this is extremely rare. There are many strains of avian influenza viruses which vary in their ability to cause disease. The strain causing the most concern at the moment is highly pathogenic H5N1.

There is a limited number of reported cases of person to person spread of AI, but no evidence of sustained transmission between people.

AI viruses can exchange genetic material with human influenza viruses in humans or susceptible animals to emerge as new viruses which may be capable of being spread easily between people. This is what makes AI a potential threat to public health.

Highly pathogenic AI (HPAI) viruses have the potential to cause severe disease in poultry, associated with a high death rate (up to 100%); the course of such disease can be so rapid the birds may die without showing signs of disease.

Controls would apply to domestic fowls, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowls, quails, pigeons, ratites (e.g. ostriches), pheasants and partridges reared or kept in captivity for breeding, the production of meat or eggs for consumption or eggs for restocking supplies of game.

### **The Current Position**

The disease has been discovered on a farm in Suffolk and protection, surveillance and restriction zones have been created around the infected premises.

It is not known how the disease entered the premises.

### **The County Council**

DEFRA is the lead government department to deal with Avian Influenza.

The County Council's Trading Standards Service is responsible for enforcing the controls which affect the County.

The County Council has an animal disease contingency plan which it will activate on confirmation that the disease is in Dorset or a neighbouring county.

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **I deal directly with the public. What should I tell someone if they report a dead bird or birds?**

Members of the public are asked to report deaths of

single wildfowl (swans, ducks and geese) or

10 or more other birds at one location

to the **Defra Helpline 08459 335577**.

Upon receiving information a risk assessment will be made by DEFRA, which may or may not require that carcasses be collected, inspected and sent for laboratory analysis.

**What should I tell someone who says they have a dead wild bird to dispose of? (eg road kill)**

If it is at all suspicious then report it to the DEFRA helpline, above. If not, wild birds may be buried or put in the household waste. Gloves should be worn and these should be cleaned thoroughly afterwards. Remember dead birds may carry other diseases.

**What should I tell someone who tells me that they keep a few birds and they're not sure what to do?**

All keepers of 50 or more poultry should register with DEFRA. The telephone number is 0800 634 1112.

DEFRA have also asked that people who have less birds register, as this will help with the disease control measures during an outbreak.

Currently all events at which birds are gathered from different premises are banned including pigeon racing.

**Do birds have to be housed?**

No, this is a requirement within the infected area, but this does not affect Dorset. This will change if disease is discovered in Dorset or at several places in the UK. You should be prepared to house or isolate your birds if required to.

Now you should try to keep your birds' feed and water so that wild birds do not have access to them. This is not a legal requirement but is a sound bio security measure.

**I or my staff visit premises where poultry are kept. What should I do at the moment?**

Firstly poultry includes turkeys, ducks, geese, pheasants, quail and other species.

If you have to visit the premises don't go into the areas where the poultry are kept unless you absolutely have to. If you have to go into the poultry area then follow the advice supplied by the Health and Safety Executive on their website, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/avianflu.htm>

**If disease is discovered at a premises with poultry what will happen?**

The full animal disease control measure will be brought in, with culling of birds on infected premises and movement restrictions applying to domesticated/farmed birds.

**I need some more information for my service or area of work.**

You can visit the DEFRA website at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm>

Or telephone the Trading Standards Service on 01305 224475.

Richard Herringshaw  
Trading Standards Service  
01305 224475