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Poland

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

First Case of H5N1 Strain of Avian Influenza in Poland

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Report Highlights:

Polish veterinary officials have confirmed the first case of H5N1 influenza virus in Poland in two dead swans found in Torun city.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Warsaw [PL1]
[PL]

Polish veterinary officials have confirmed the first case of H5N1 avian influenza virus in Poland. It was detected in two dead swans found in the city of Torun, a large city about 125 miles northwest of Warsaw. The birds were found late March 2, in the city water sports club area near the Vistula river.

Samples were sent to the laboratory of the National Veterinary Research Institute in Pulawy. Preliminary results revealed the H5 subtype of the AI virus. On March 6, Pulawy confirmed that the swans died from the H5N1. Professor Zmudzinski, Head of the Virology Department of the National Veterinary Research Institute, said that Polish officials used the same testing methods for AI as used in other laboratories in the EU. On March 6, samples were sent to Weybridge in the UK for confirmation.

Upon preliminary confirmation of AI, the Polish veterinary service notified the EU and activated the emergency reaction team of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province and Torun City. The following actions have been implemented:

- The entire area of the Vistula River bank where the swans were found (an area very close to major tourist attractions) was closed and movement of pedestrians and cars banned.
- A three kilometer radius "Infected" area and a 10 kilometer "Intensive Surveillance" area were established around the area where the birds were found.
- Mats soaked with disinfecting solution have been placed at entrances to the infected area, as well as at entrances to all poultry farms in the region.
- Police are enforcing all quarantine regulations.

There are six commercial poultry farms and four poultry slaughter and processing plants in the area of Torun County. One plant is located within the Intensive Surveillance area. Like nearly everywhere in Poland, there are also numerous small, back-yard flocks in the area. Post will continue to provide updates of developments.