



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 4/27/2006

GAIN Report Number: UK6018

United Kingdom

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Preliminary confirmation of H7 avian influenza in UK

2006

Approved by:

Besa L. Kotati
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Steve R. Knight

Report Highlights:

Preliminary tests indicate that the H7 avian influenza (AI) virus is present in samples from chickens found dead on a poultry farm near Dereham in Norfolk, England. As a precautionary measure, all poultry on the establishment are being slaughtered while laboratory tests continue.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
London [UK1]
[UK]

The UK Government's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) announced last evening, Wednesday, April 26, 2006, that preliminary tests indicate that the avian influenza (AI) virus is present in samples from chickens found dead on a poultry farm near Dereham in Norfolk.



Further tests are being carried out to determine the strain of the virus. The results are expected late today or tomorrow. The preliminary test results show that it is likely to be the H7 strain of AI, not H5N1 as found in Scotland earlier this month. Further confirmatory tests are in progress to determine the pathogen type.

Clinical suspicion was reported to Defra on the evening of April 25, 2006. The company had noted a decline in the egg drop over the previous week and water and feed consumption was down. Limited additional mortality had also been observed. Defra immediately put the broiler breeder facility under restriction and an investigation commenced. As a precautionary measure, the UK Chief Veterinary Officer ordered the slaughter of approximately 35,000 birds at the facility. This commenced today. There is no financial compensation available to the establishment owner. Rather, farmers are expected to self-insure. Defra has indicated that further action will be taken pending the outcome of the additional laboratory results.

All avian influenzas (H1 to H16) can be low pathogenic but only H5 and H7 can become highly pathogenic. If this disease is the latter, under EU rules the UK will be required to implement a Protection Zone of at least 3 kilometers and a Surveillance Zone of at least 10 kilometers. It would also affect the UK's AI-free export status. Dereham is at the heart of the UK poultry industry which produces nearly 2 MMT of poultry meat per annum. As such, the sector is nervously awaiting the outcome of the test results.