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Report Number: NL2020-0051

Report Name: Netherlands Detects Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Swans

Country: Netherlands

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Agriculture in the News, Poultry and Products, Pest/Disease Occurrences

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Report Highlights:

Wageningen Bioveterinary Research has identified the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N8) (HPAI) in two dead swans. The two swans were part of a group of six that were found dead in the Netherlands, near Kockengen (in the province of Utrecht).

General Information

Wageningen Bioveterinary Research has identified the presence of (H5N8) highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in two dead swans. The two swans were part of a group of six swans that were found dead in the Netherlands, near Kockengen (in the province of Utrecht).

Wageningen University and Research reports:

> {i}n August, H5N8 virus was detected in dead mute swans in Western Russia, then also in tufted ducks and mallards. The virus was then also detected in dead wild birds in Kazakhstan in September. In October, H5N8 virus was detected in swans at a zoo in Jerusalem, Israel. Wild migratory birds can bring the virus from these areas to Europe during their autumn migration. However, no H5N8 viruses have yet been reported on the migration routes to the Netherlands from countries east of the Netherlands.
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> It is striking that the H5N8 virus was detected in dead swans in Russia, Israel, and now the Netherlands. Swans may be very sensitive to this specific virus, this will have to be investigated further. The wild mute swan populations in Russia are known not to migrate to Europe to hibernate. The virus was therefore probably introduced to the Netherlands by other bird species, after which local bird populations became infected. This suggests that the virus is circulating locally among wild birds in the Netherlands. No dead birds from other areas in the Netherlands have yet been tested, so it is unclear whether the virus has spread further.[1]

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has asked the animal diseases expert group[2] to assess the finding. The experts will identify the risk for poultry farms to become infected with HPAI. Afterwards, the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Carola Schouten, will determine whether follow-up steps are necessary.[3]

In 2016 and 2017, the Netherlands experienced several avian influenza outbreaks in commercial poultry flocks (mainly duck farms), which negatively affected Dutch poultry production and exports. For additional information, see NL6036 - Status of Bird Flu Outbreaks in The Netherlands.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

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[1] https://www.wur.nl/nl/Onderzoek-Resultaten/Onderzoeksinstituten/Bioveterinary-Research/show-bvr/Hoog-pathogene-vogelgriep-H5N8-bij-wilde-knobbelzwanen.htm

[2] The animal diseases expert group provides the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality with advice on the veterinary-technical aspects of the prevention and control of contagious animal diseases.

[3] https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/10/21/vogelgriep-vastgesteld-bij-wilde-zwanen-in-kockengen