

Rural Affairs Update

Briefing on the Current Animal Disease Situation in Great Britain 13 November 2007

Agriculture in Great Britain is currently affected by three different animal diseases: Foot and Mouth Disease [FMD], Bluetongue Disease [BTV] and Avian Influenza [AI].

Avian Influenza

There has been a new outbreak of Avian Influenza in turkeys on Redgrave Park Farm on the Norfolk/Suffolk border, near Diss. It is confirmed as the highly pathogenic type H5N1. The premises also contain ducks and geese. All 6500 birds on the premises are being slaughtered.

A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone have been set up around the Infected Premises. In addition a wider Restricted Zone covering the whole of Suffolk and most of Norfolk has been set up. For a map of these zones go to:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/pdf/declaration-tcz121107-2nd.pdf>

In these zones, movement restrictions will be imposed and poultry must be isolated from wild birds. All bird keepers should feed and water their birds under cover in order to minimise the risk of contact with wild birds and anyone keeping birds outdoors must have a clear plan for housing or separating their birds. An advice booklet on how to do this is available:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/pdf/separating.pdf>

In addition, it has been announced that the national general licence on bird gatherings has been revoked, and bird shows and pigeon racing will not be permitted for the time being. For further information on the implications go to:

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

If you need to report dead wild gulls, waders, ducks, geese or swans; groups of dead birds or need advice on avian flu, please contact the **Defra Helpline 08459 33 55 77** open from 6am - 10pm, and choose the Avian Influenza option.

Bluetongue Disease

The names of Bluetongue zones have changed. The Bluetongue Control Zone is now known as the *Protection Zone* and the current Protection Zone will become known as the *Surveillance Zone*.

To date 63 cases have been confirmed in the area around Ipswich in Suffolk and parts of Essex, with cases in Kent and near Peterborough in Cambridgeshire. To see a map of the Protection [marked in blue] and Surveillance zones [marked in black] go to:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/pdf/declaration-btv-pzsz021107.pdf>

You can keep up to date with the numbers of new cases, permitted livestock movements and the spread of the disease via:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/latest/index.htm>

Bluetongue affects all ruminants [cattle, sheep, goats, deer, llamas and alpacas], sheep are particularly badly affected. The strain in this outbreak is type 8, which has been circulating in Europe [Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands] since August 2006. Bluetongue is spread by some species of biting midges and is transmitted to an animal by a midge bite. The disease is not transmitted directly from animal to animal. Humans are not susceptible to Bluetongue.

Foot & Mouth Disease

On Monday 5 November the FMD Surveillance Zone was lifted and only the FMD Restricted Zone remains in place, centred around Guilford.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/fmd/pdf/declaration051107.pdf> Movement restrictions remain in place in the Restricted Zone and susceptible livestock [sheep, cattle, pigs, goats] may not be moved out of this zone.

The UK has been split into three areas for export purposes. Note that live exports are still prohibited from Great Britain.

- FMD Free Export Area – Meat and products originating from susceptible animals in this area will be eligible for export under normal Community rules subject to certification.
- FMD Restricted Export Area – Meat and products originating from susceptible animals in this area will be eligible for export provided they meet certain conditions, including providing documentation confirming the completion of a 21 day standstill and residency period (7 day standstill in the case of pigs).
- FMD No Export Area – Meat and products originating from susceptible animals in this area cannot be allowed to be exported.

These regulations are likely to come into force on 19 November. The regulations are strict and complex, and subject to change without notice. To view a map of the three areas go to: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/int-trde/cins/2007/pdf/cin07349-trademap061107.pdf>

To follow further updates on the FMD situation go to:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth/>

Pastoral Issues

The Arthur Rank Centre is working with the Farming Help Charities to ensure that appropriate support and resources are available as and when they become necessary. The ARC-Addington Fund has re-opened its hardship fund to cover costs associated with buying extra feed and bedding. The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Fund [RABI] is able to help with household expenditure. Please contact Farming Help in the first instance on **0845 367 9990**. www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk will carry regular updates.

The Farming Help charities all require additional funding at this time – please encourage congregations and others to make donations.

Creator God,

Hear our prayers for farmers and for all who are deeply affected by outbreaks of animal disease and the restrictions imposed across the UK.

Bless all efforts to prevent the spread of the diseases.

To those who are stressed and anxious bring comfort and hope;

To those entrusted with decision-making give wisdom and discernment;

To your Church in its ministry to all, grant a watchful eye, a loving heart and a prophetic voice in the service of your Kingdom;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Jill Hopkinson

National Rural Officer for the Church of England, Arthur Rank Centre.

Hugh Baker & Dennis Handley
Rural Officers for the Wakefield Diocese