Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

EGG PRODUCERS FEDERATION OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (Inc.)

HPAI H5N1Webinar Minutes

Tuesday 18 June 2024 2pm – 3pm

Keynote: Dr Mary van Andel, Chief Veterinary Officer, MPI

Discussion: What is H5NI, how is this strain different? A summary of the international situation; Key learnings from our colleagues overseas; how we can use this to strengthen NZ's biosecurity

Topic	Key points
Dr van Andel **H5N1 Overview**	Dr van Andel gave a comprehensive overview of the emergence and spread of the H5N1 strain in wildlife, and its impact particularly on poultry. + H5N1 is of particular concern to MPI as it has appeared in Antarctica for the first time. New Zealand can no longer rely on the fact that we are too far away for a sick bird to travel here
Testing and Surveillance activity	+ MPI is undertaking active surveillance and testing in Antarctica and the sub-antarctic islands + Locally, the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline is receiving many more calls for testing than usual. In response, MPI has been updating vets on testing and what to look out for. This will be reinforced at the Veterinary Conference this week + Surveillance call outs have largely been for wild birds to date, rather than domestic poultry + MPI is focusing on accelerating virus identification turnaround from its genomics team to improve efficiency. + There is a lot of work to do across testing, surveillance and information sharing

Overseas	+ Our International counterparts have shared what has helped the most to respond to this strain of the virus. + As the disease cannot be eradicated from wildlife, the primary emphasis is on increasing biosecurity measures at farm level + MPI is focused on what has worked for our close counterparts in the UK and Australia, and how to adapt that here
New Zealand focus	+ Managed pathways for virus are locked down, but we can't control wild bird movements + An increase of on-farm biosecurity measures to be the collective focus for MPI and Industry + A 'one health' response is underway, coordinating aligned agencies and industries to focus on human, environmental and animal health
Q&A	Q. Which migratory birds are carrying the disease? A. We don't know for certain. Scavenger or colony birds are more likely to be infected. **Action: Mary to send members magazine article of migratory pattern of birds to the Southern Hemisphere** Q. What's happening with vaccination? A. Department of Conservation has started a small trial on native birds in captive management. To be effective, two doses are required so the birds need to be able to be easily identified and captured for the second dose and ongoing monitoring.In the US, testing following the the vaccination of one particular speciesindicated the protection did not last long. Q. Farm hygiene (biosecurity): What are the key things farmers can do now to up their biosecurity game? A. - Take steps to prevent contact between wild birds and poultry - Ensure water supplied to poultry is clean, covered, and feed is stored inside

	- If the virus does get in, restrict visitors, meticulously record visitor names and contact details, ask staff and visitors to wear approved PPE, restrict their movement around the farm. - Contact tracing of visitors is critical to controlling the spread **Action: Mary to share MPI website link to this information** **https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/pests-and-diseases-not-in-new-zealand/animal-diseases-not-in-nz/high-pathogenicity-avian-influenza/commercial-poultry** Q. How do farmers protect their staff? A. MPI is working with the Ministry of Health and Worksafe on keeping workers safe in the event HPAI comes here. In the meantime, the health website has the latest information on personal safety. Q.Are there formal procedures around keeping free range birds locked inside in the event of an outbreak? A. MPI is working through what 'housing orders' as used overseas might look like in a New Zealand context, acknowledging that there are a wide range of different operations within New Zealand, some would be able to do this easily while others less so. Q. Any consideration being given to registration of smaller/backyard flocks? A. Michael Brooks: A database is being built . PIANZ is working with FMNZ, using feed supply as an information source for this database and will align with MPI Q. How will we know if it [H5N1] gets here? A. MPI will confirm detection with Michael Brooks who will alert farmers. **Action: Michael Brooks reminded all farmers to update their farm information and mobile numbers on the PIANZ/EPF farm database.** **This is critical as notification of an incursion, plus details, will be sent via TEXT straight away.** Q. Overseas, how has the virus affected poultry and egg sales? A. Michael Brooks: There has been an impact, but it was relatively short. A downturn in sales for at least three months, but a bounceback to normal within six months.

	Action: John Russell to share consumption drop data Q. Where is an incursion most likely to first occur in NZ? A. Not easy to predict place, as it also depends on where it is reported from. Highest risk time is September due to movement of migratory birds at this time. Q. Wild bird control around farms – what is the thinking around letting farmers take control of wild birds into their own hands? A. Overseas experience has shown this approach has not been successful as it simply drives the birds into other areas. The disease witll inevitably be spread regardless.
In Conclusion:	**+ Mary reminded webinar attendees that one bird poo deposit infected with H5N1 has the ability to effect up to 10,000 birds. This is a highly virulent strain and focus must be trained on preparedness at farm level.** **+ Michael Brooks added:** - **everyone put the 0800 80 9966 number into their mobile phones. It is staffed 24/7 for immediate response** - **everyone update their mobile numbers with the farm register as requested, for immediate notification** - **PIANZ/EPF will circulate a poster to put in sheds with the 0800 number on it, and the signs of illness to look out for in flocks**