

Issue 8, 8 April 2025

The Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (PIANZ) and the Egg Producers Federation (EPF) have joined with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to provide farmers with regular updates about our preparations for high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI).

HPAI H7N6 2024 – Key learnings from New Zealand's response

Industry and MPI hosted a webinar summarising the process, response and key learnings from New Zealand's first HPAI outbreak in December last year.

The webinar was an opportunity for industry members to learn from the H7N6 outbreak and response and consider the implications for their own businesses.

John McKay, EPF Chair and CEO of Mainland Poultry led the presentation. He noted the importance of capturing and sharing the learnings from this response "so that farmers can use them in their own planning, and collectively, we can create a more resilient industry."

The webinar detailed key aspects of the response and associated activities at the farm, including:

- clinical and production signs
- cause of the outbreak
- trade impacts
- MPI's role, movement controls and other legal tools used in the response
- depopulation, disposal and decontamination
- repopulation
- lessons learned from this response.

Tony Hailwood from MPI spoke about compensation, including how MPI calculates compensation in the event where MPI is exercising powers under the Biosecurity Act.

A panel of industry and MPI speakers answered a range of questions from members, covering issues such as depopulation methods, cleaning and disinfection costs, vaccination, and ways to prevent poultry from contact with wild birds.

The differences between the H7N6 response and an H5 outbreak were highlighted in the discussion. The response to H7N6 was led by MPI using Biosecurity Act powers because that strain was able to be eradicated. The approach to an outbreak of H5N1 in New Zealand would be quite different because H5N1 will be circulating in wild birds and likely unable to be eradicated.

Lessons learned from the H7N6 response will help with preparedness for H5N1, including long-term management of the disease.

John McKay concluded: "We needed MPI's support and MPI needed the cooperation of the industry and farmers to run a successful response."

The webinar video is available in the members' sections of the PIANZ and EPF websites.

'Avian Influenza Health and Safety Guidance for Workplaces'

Guidelines for workplace managers and people who work with birds and other animals at risk of avian influenza in New Zealand have now been published.

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora developed the guidelines with MPI, industry, the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Health, to provide advice for at-risk occupational groups on how to protect against avian influenza.

The guidelines include information for employers and workers, and details of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn according to the level of risk. They reflect learnings from the H7N6 response in Otago, and have also been reviewed by Worksafe.

We encourage you to familiarise yourself with the guidelines and consider what they mean for your business. You can read them at:

Avian Influenza health and safety guidance for workplaces – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora



MPI industry workshop

Representatives from PIANZ and EPF met with MPI staff for a workshop in March to agree a focused programme of work over the next six months to ensure an appropriate level of readiness will be achieved across the industry. Egbert Segers, John McKay and Michael Brooks represented industry at the workshop. A more detailed report of the workshop outcomes will be included in the next newsletter.

Commerce Commission guidance on free-range labelling

The Commerce Commission has developed guidance for New Zealand's free-range egg and poultry meat producers as the industry prepares for the potential arrival of H5N1.

The guidance details the actions the government may advise or order (under the Biosecurity Act 1993) and contains recommendations of preparations producers can start making now.

Should H5N1 arrive in New Zealand, being ready as a business to help consumers understand why your egg or poultry meat products cannot be described as 'free range' for a period of time, is vital. Tools and tactics to communicate this can be developed now and is the responsibility of both the individual producer and industry.

This guidance has been circulated to all members and is available on MPI's website as well as PIANZ and EPF member websites.

Harrison Grierson Report

Harrison Grierson is one of New Zealand's leading environment planning and engineering agencies. They have been engaged by industry to develop a detailed report of each region's disposal options so that every producer understands the local capabilities available to them in the event of an HPAI outbreak.

The company is in the process of breaking down the capabilities region by region so that each district has best disposal options available for their own environment. This report will be shared with members once completed.

HPAI detections overseas

Restrictions on poultry owners near the H7N8 avian influenza (bird flu) outbreak near Euroa, **Victoria** have been reduced, following no new detections since 24 February 2025. HPAI H7N8 was detected at four linked poultry premises that were part of the same network of farms.

Mandatory movement controls are no longer in place for some townships and the housing requirement for premises with 50 or more birds in the restricted area is now also lifted – although the voluntary housing of birds is still encouraged.

Hunting of gamebirds has been listed as a restricted activity within the control zones around the impacted farms, including restrictions on birds being moved in or out of the area.

In **North America**, poultry outbreaks continue although the numbers of poultry farms impacted has decreased compared to December and January.

Argentina reported its first outbreak of H5N1 HPAI in poultry since August 2023, with a detection in backyard birds that are believed to have been infected by contact with wild birds. Argentina had previously declared freedom of H5N1 HPAI in poultry in August 2023, and HPAI H5N1 in wild birds in August 2024. Other South American countries have issued alerts to enhance surveillance following this detection.

H5N1 has been detected in a sheep in **England**, following routine surveillance of farmed livestock on property where H5N1 had been confirmed in other captive birds. This sheep was the only one infected and all others in the flock tested negative. The sheep was housed for

lambing with poultry that were found to be infected. Lactating dairy cattle are the only species where onwards transmission has been confirmed to occur.

Resources

High pathogenicity avian influenza – MPI

www.mpi.govt.nz/HPAI

Avian influenza – Health New Zealand

info.health.nz/conditions-treatments/infectious-diseases/highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza-bird-flu

Avian influenza – Agriculture Victoria

agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/poultry-diseases/avian-influenza-bird-flu

Avian influenza latest situation – Defra

www.gov.uk/government/news/bird-flu-avian-influenza-latest-situation-in-england

Contact us

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Egg Producers Federation of New Zealand (Inc)

PIANZ

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Prepared by:

Ministry for Primary Industries

Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand

Egg Producers Federation

Preferences | Unsubscribe