



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Dear poultry keeper,

Avian influenza disease control measures in England

I am writing to you, as a registered¹ poultry keeper, to let you know about changes to the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) currently in place across the whole of England. The current AIPZ, in place since 6 December 2016, requires all poultry and captive birds to be kept indoors or otherwise separated from wild birds.

From 28 February, a new AIPZ comes into force that takes a more targeted approach to controlling the disease. All poultry keepers across England must continue to observe strict biosecurity measures and housing will not be mandatory over the whole country. However keepers in some areas of England **will** still be required to house or net their birds. This is because based on clear scientific evidence, we consider the risk from wild birds is still too high in these Higher Risk Areas (HRAs) to rely on biosecurity measures alone.

The options open to you from 28 February will therefore depend on whether you are inside or outside one of the defined HRAs. We have published the rationale behind the new HRAs along with an interactive map which you can search using a postcode, place name or grid reference (preferred).

The best way to avoid contact between poultry and wild birds is to keep them housed in a suitable building. However, the new targeted approach is designed to give keepers options and allow free range production to continue where they consider that the risk from wild birds can be sufficiently controlled. From 28th February, a new Prevention Zone covering England will legally require the following:

¹ If you feel that you are receiving this letter in error or need to update your records, please email customerregistration@apha.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 03000 200 301

- **All poultry and captive bird keepers in England** must comply with a set of minimum biosecurity standards whether you are in the new HRAs or outside them.
- **All poultry and captive bird keepers in England with more than 500 birds** must comply with additional biosecurity measures regardless of whether you are inside or outside the HRA.
- **Outside the HRA**, keepers have the option to allow poultry and kept birds managed access to fenced outdoor areas. If you plan to let your birds outdoors, there are additional biosecurity measures you must put in place. These apply regardless of the size of your flock, whether you have a commercial holding, a backyard flock or keep your birds as pets. Before birds are let outside, you must take all reasonable steps to remove and minimise the risk of existing faecal contamination from wild birds.
- **Outside the HRA**, housing or fully netting the fenced outdoor areas is optional. All keepers must consider very carefully whether the measures you are taking sufficiently reduce the risk of contact between your birds and wild birds, particularly wild waterfowl. If you consider this remains a risk, you should keep your birds housed or in fully netted areas.
- **Within the HRA**, all poultry and captive birds, regardless of flock size, must either be housed or kept within fully netted outdoor areas, pens, cages or aviaries.

Further information on these control measures can be found on the GOV.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>. These are temporary measures to control disease and, as with any disease control measures, we keep them under review based on the latest situation and up-to-date scientific advice.

You can also play an important part in our surveillance efforts by reporting dead birds you find to Defra. If you find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or gulls, or five or more dead wild birds of other species in the same location, you should report them to the Defra helpline (Tel: 03459 33 55 77) or to defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

If you have any concerns about biosecurity arrangements, or your birds' health or welfare, I would urge you to discuss these with your private vet in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



NIGEL GIBBENS CBE

CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER

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