



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

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## United Kingdom

### Poultry and Products

### Update on HPAI H5N1 in quarantine in the UK

**2005**

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**Report Highlights:**

An epidemiological report on the case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in a quarantine facility in the UK in October this year has indicated that the disease was found, contrary to earlier reports identifying a South American parrot, only in a group of Mesias from Taiwan. According to the report, the infection was transmitted between the Mesias but there is no evidence of transmission to other bird species in the facility.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
London [UK1]  
[UK]

On Tuesday, November 15, 2005 the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published the epidemiology report on the case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in a quarantine facility in Essex it had received from the National Emergency Epidemiology Group. Of most significance is the announcement that the disease was found, contrary to earlier reports identifying a South American parrot, only in a group of Mesias from Taiwan. Further, the infection had been transmitted between the Mesias but with no evidence of transmission to other species in the facility including the sentinel birds.

In a more detailed explanation, the report goes on to explain that the original identification of HPAI H5N1 on October 21, 2005 was made from a pool of tissues derived from a Pionus Parrot (Surinam) and a Mesia (Taiwan). The report states that it was not possible to say whether the virus isolated came from the parrot tissue or the mesia tissue or both. However, in the light of the other evidence the report suggests that the balance of probabilities is that the source was the Mesia sample. The H5N1 strain identified was most closely associated with a virus isolated from ducks in China early this year. This is consistent with Defra's working hypothesis of 23 October, 2005 that the likeliest origin of the infection was the birds from Taiwan.

The report sets out a reconciliation between the total numbers of birds imported and their eventual fate based on the available evidence. Most importantly, it indicates that the investigations undertaken to date have not established any evidence of live birds being removed from the facility during the period of quarantine.

Announcing the publication of the report, DEFRA's Chief Veterinary Officer Debby Reynolds highlighted that the "report contains significant epidemiological findings and helps to further our understanding of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. In particular the apparent lack of transmission of H5N1 between species in the facility will be of interest to the international community."

In summary, on 16 September, 2005 a consignment of 148 parrots (Caiques, Pionus, Macaws and Amazons) arrived from Surinam at a facility that had not been used since 9 March, 2005. On 28 September, 2005 a consignment of 186 birds (Mynahs, Mesias and Laughing Thrushes) documented as coming from Taiwan entered the facility. The 30-day quarantine period restarted with the arrival of the birds from Taiwan. A number of birds then died within the quarantine period: these were either submitted for testing, frozen or reported as incinerated. All remaining live imported birds (234) and 4 sentinel chickens within the facility were humanely destroyed on 21 October. How the birds came to be infected given Taiwan's AI-free status remains to be proven.

A full copy of the report can be found at:

[www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm)