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## Germany

### Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

### AI confirmed in a Commercial Poultry Farm - Consumer Reaction Limited

## 2006

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**Report Highlights:**

The German national reference laboratory confirmed high pathogen H5N1 in a commercial poultry farm in the State of Saxony. In line with the German AI protection law all poultry in the affected farm was destroyed. The route of transmission is still being investigated. A survey by the national TV station ARD suggests that consumer reaction on the new findings will be limited. The value of German poultry and egg production totalled US\$ 1.98 billion in 2005.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
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Unscheduled Report  
Berlin [GM1]  
[GM]

On April 5, 2006, the German reference laboratory *Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut* (FLI) confirmed high pathogen H5N1 in turkeys in a commercial farm in Wermsdorf. Wermsdorf is located about 50 km east of the city of Leipzig in the state of Saxony in the East of Germany. AI was last confirmed in a commercial flock in Germany in May 2003.

The entire flock (8,000 turkeys, 5,000 geese, and 3,300 chickens held in separate units) were destroyed in line with the German Avian Influenza Protection Law (*Gefluegelpestschutzverordnung*). A protection zone (3 km), a surveillance zone (10 km), and a buffer zone (13 km) were established immediately. In addition, local authorities also decided to cull all poultry within the 3 km protection zone as a preventive measure. This affects 90 farms with a total of 14,000 birds. All exemptions from the requirement to keep poultry indoors have been revoked for the entire State of Saxony, except for zoological gardens.

The EU decided to place an export ban in the buffer zone. This means that no poultry nor poultry-related products from a 13 km radius around the affected farm may be exported to other EU member states or to non EU countries. The ban will be in effect until May 8, 2006. The fact that the ban was limited to the 13 km zone rather than the whole state is a recognition of the swift and thorough response by the local authorities.

Experts from the FLI are currently investigating how the virus got into the farm. One theory is that contact of the geese with wild birds led to the spread of the virus into the flock. However, there are some doubts about this theory because the virus was only detected in turkeys and none of the geese had contracted AI. The farm obtained a special permit to exempt the geese for four hours per day from the requirement to be kept indoors. This was deemed necessary because breeding geese react with behavioral disorders (e.g. stop propagating) if kept permanently inside a building. Other suspected means of transmission include contaminated feed or human action such as contaminated boots.

### **Poultry production in Saxony and Germany**

With a total of 16,000 birds, the affected farm was the largest commercial poultry farm in Saxony. In May 2005, Saxony recorded 2,400 farms with 7.7 million chickens, 223,900 turkeys, 39,300 geese, and 14,000 ducks. Saxony ranks fourth among the German poultry producing states with seven percent of total commercial poultry population. The top three poultry producing states are Lower-Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Bavaria, with 44, 9, and 8 percent of the poultry population, respectively.

In 2005, Germany produced 1.03 million MT of poultry meat and 790,000 MT or 12.85 billion pieces of eggs. The production value at the producer level amounted to US\$ 1.33 billion (1.1 billion Euro) for poultry plus US\$ 651 million (542 million Euro) for eggs. In total, it comprises 4.5 percent of the total German agricultural production.

According to the animal census carried out in May 2005, Germany reports a total of 120.5 million live poultry animals. Broken down this represents 107 million chickens, thereof 50 million laying hens and chicks and 57 million broilers, plus 11 million turkeys, 2.3 million ducks, and 329,500 geese.

**Table: Poultry numbers in Saxony and Germany in May 2005**

	Germany	Saxony
Chickens	107 million	7.7 million
Turkeys	11 million	223,900
Ducks	2.3 million	39,300
Geese	329,500	14,000
Total Poultry	120.5 million	8.04 million

Source: German Federal Office of Statistics, Wiesbaden

### Impact on poultry consumption

Consumer reaction towards the first detection in a commercial poultry farms appears to be limited. A representative survey conducted by the national TV station ARD on April 6, found that only 22 percent of the respondents said that they will refrain from eating poultry products due to the new findings, while 75 percent claimed it will not influence their eating habits. After the detection of AI in several European countries and Turkey in the Fall and Winter of 2005/2006, household purchases<sup>1</sup> of poultry products in Germany dropped by 18 percent in January and 17 percent in February 2006, compared to the previous year.

### Related reports:

Report		Title	Date released
GM6011	Germany	AI Update: AI confirmed in cats and suspected in a beech marten	03/10/2006
GM6008	Germany	AI update: 127 cases in wild birds none in domestic poultry	03/02/2006
GM6007	Germany	AI among wild birds reaches German mainland	02/21/2006
GM6005	Germany	AI Confirmed in Two Dead Swans in Northern Germany	02/16/2006
GM5042	Germany	Avian Influenza Update: Free Range Chicken Allowed Outside Again	12/19/2005
GM5035	Germany	AI-Threat: German Poultry Must Stay Inside - But Only in Certain Regions	09/12/2005
EU36055	EU-25	AI: Impact on EU Poultry Trade and Prices	04/06/2006
E36038	EU-25	EU-25 Poultry and Products Avian Influenza: Impact of Outbreaks on European Poultry and Meat Markets	03/07/2006
E36015	EU-25	Poultry and Products – Semi-annual 2006	01/31/2006

<sup>1</sup> This does not include consumption at hotels, restaurants, and institutional facilities.