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Poland

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

2007

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Report Highlights:

On December 1, the Polish Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Service confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic (H5N1) Avian Influenza (AI) near Plock on two commercial turkey farms. This is the first outbreak of high-pathogenic AI on commercial poultry farms in Poland. The outbreak should not affect Poland's poultry exports, unless it spreads further.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
Warsaw [PL1]
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On December 1, the Polish Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Service confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic (H5N1) Avian Influenza (AI) near Plock on two commercial turkey farms. This is the first outbreak of high-pathogenic AI on commercial poultry farms in Poland. The outbreak is located about 130 km northwest of Warsaw at the edge of Mazowsze province. Authorities culled all turkeys on two affected farms and on one neighboring farm (over 9,000 birds). The likely source of the outbreak is wild birds, as Plock is on a major migratory route. Most meat from the affected farms was destroyed, but 770 kilograms of turkey meat had already been distributed to retail stores in northern Poland and is being recalled. There is no evidence of AI transmission to humans at this time, but 60 employees from the affected farms were quarantined.

Quarantine procedures are in place: there is a 3 km protection zone, surrounded by a 10 km surveillance zone. The Minister of Agriculture initiated a number of countrywide policies, banning sales of live birds at farmers markets and all poultry shows and requiring that farmers keep poultry indoors. The veterinary service is now conducting the survey of all farms and poultry located in the affected area. The results of the survey will be known on December 4. On December 3, a Polish Veterinary Service representative confirmed to AgWarsaw that as the afternoon of December 3, no additional farms were affected.

The European Commission will react with trade restrictions for poultry from the affected region. However, according to preliminary information, the EU veterinary authorities were satisfied with the Polish reaction to the outbreak and the ban will be limited to a few counties located in Mazowsze and Kujawsko-Pomorskie provinces. This region is not a major poultry producing area in Poland.

In spring 2005, there was an outbreak of AI in wild birds in Poland and consumers reacted by decreasing poultry consumption about 18 percent that year. AgWarsaw expects that the reaction to this outbreak will be less dramatic because turkey consumption is only about 20 percent of Polish poultry consumption and because consumers are more accustomed to hearing about the disease.

Poultry exports to the EU are big business for Poland with sales of \$541 million USD in 2006 and are up 38 percent through August this year. If the EC limits its ban to the affected area, it should not have a big impact on Polish poultry exports because the region is not a major poultry producing area.