



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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To All Provincial Directors

Dear Colleagues,

CLARIFICATION AND UPDATE REGARDING DISEASE CONTROL MEASURES FOR PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY A CONFIRMED HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI) OUTBREAK

Due to recent queries received regarding various aspects of the HPAI outbreak, DAFF would like to request that you take note of the following information and distribute it to all of your state veterinarians. Please also refer to our previous letters as the information contained therein remains valid.

Previous letters include:

- a) *"HPAI H5N8 Avian Influenza Outbreak Control Measures"* dated 23 June 2017;
- b) *"Avian Influenza Surveillance and the Registration of Poultry Establishments for export"* dated 26 June 2017;
- c) *"Procedure Manual for the sale of live birds Version 2"* sent 30 June 2017;
- d) *"Avian Influenza Surveillance and the Registration of Poultry Establishments for export"* dated 4 July 2017;
- e) *"AI Surveillance Flow Chart and reporting template"* sent 6 July 2017;
- f) *"AI Surveillance"* dated 7 July 2017 and
- g) *"HPAI Movement Controls of live chickens"* dated 5 July 2017.

If you do not have all or any one of these letters, please contact epidemiology@daff.gov.za.

1. Quarantine, tracing and biosecurity

- 1.1 The measures prescribed in our letter dated 23 June 2017 must be immediately instituted on any farm affected by a confirmed outbreak of HPAI;
- 1.2 All of these measures must be extended to any neighbouring properties with poultry, according to the risk estimation by the state veterinarian;
- 1.3 No birds may enter or leave the site and no products (manure, feed, feathers, eggs etc.) may leave the site.

2. Culling and destruction

As prescribed in Table 2 of the regulations of the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84), regarding Highly pathogenic avian influenza (fowl plague) / Notifiable avian influenza, all infected and contact animals on such affected properties shall be isolated and destroyed by the responsible person under the supervision of an officer.

3. Exemption from destruction of certain biosecure in-contact sites

3.1 According to Regulation 11 (2) (a) of the Animal Diseases Regulations (as amended), "... a responsible State Veterinarian may if he is satisfied by the circumstances of a responsible person or his land or animals and that the achievement of the controlled purpose concerned will not be defeated thereby, and subject to the written approval of the director and for the time period as determined by the director and subject to the conditions as determined by the director, grant to a responsible person written postponement from compliance with a particular controlled veterinary act...". Thus, the owner / manager of poultry quarantined due to an outbreak of HPAI, with the support of the provincial Veterinary services, may apply to the Director Animal Health for some of these animals to be exempted from the prescribed control measure of destruction. Prior to an application to the Director Animal Health for such an exemption, the responsible State Veterinarian must be satisfied that the in contact site being applied for is unlikely to become infected with HPAI although it is located on the same property as an infected site or a property neighbouring a property with an infected site.

- 3.2 In-contact sites that will be considered as eligible for exemption from destruction by the Director Animal Health should comply at least with the following criteria:
- a) No symptoms of HPAI on the site and no abnormal morbidity or mortality of any poultry on the site;
 - b) Separated from the HPAI infected site by a fence with access control;

- c) Employ a separate biosecurity management system, with no indirect contact with the HPAI infected site (E.g. separate workers, vehicles, water sources, feed sources, containers etc.).

3.3 Applications for the exemption from destruction of in contact sites, should preferably be made in writing by the local state veterinarian and submitted to the Director Animal Health on epidemiology@daff.gov.za, accompanied by a full epidemiological investigation report, in support of the exemption request.

3.4 Exempted in contact sites must remain under quarantine. No birds may enter or leave the site and no products (manure, feed and feathers) may leave the site. The only exception with regard to the movement of poultry products off the site is the movement of table eggs which may occur only under the conditions described below.

4. Conditions for the movement of table eggs from exempted in-contact sites

4.1 Any in-contact site wishing to move eggs off the site must first be officially exempted from destruction as an in-contact site by the Director Animal Health, following a written application to this effect, submitted to Epidemiology@daff.gov.za. Such a site must comply with all the conditions for exemption.

4.2 Eggs must be collected and isolated daily, under official veterinary supervision.

4.3 Once isolated, each batch of eggs must be wrapped in plastic with the following information clearly indicated:

- a) Date of collection;
- b) House/site of origin.

4.4 Permission to move eggs off exempted in-contact sites is immediately revoked, following any positive test results or any abnormal morbidity or mortality reported for that particular site. Any such test results or mortalities must be immediately reported to the local state veterinarian.

4.5 Chickens from the exempted in-contact sites with no abnormal morbidity and mortality must undergo the following testing on an ongoing basis, in order for eggs to be released - the more often testing is conducted the more often eggs can be released. Samples must be collected under state veterinary supervision, that is either by a state veterinarian or animal health technician or by a private veterinarian with the knowledge and consent of the state veterinarian. Samples must be submitted for avian influenza PCR to a DAFF approved laboratory.

- a) Samples to be taken:
 - i. Tracheal and cloacal swabs from each bird;

- ii. Samples from 60 chickens must be collected randomly from each exempted site;
 - iii. NO serological samples are required.
- b) In the case of any sick or dying birds, being detected as part of the normal morbidity or mortality, samples for PCR must also be taken of these animals - prioritise spleen and caecal tonsils samples but other internal organ samples may also be taken;
 - c) Use plastic swabs (not wooden, as it could contain PCR inhibitors) and place the swabs in 2 to 5ml sterile PBS;
 - d) Organ samples should be placed in clean containers and the outside surface of the containers must be disinfected;
 - e) All samples must be sent on ice (4C) and must be packaged in triple packaging in compliance with the Regulations of the National Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act No 93 of 1996);
 - f) All costs will be at the expense of the owner.

4.6 Following receipt of negative test results, eggs collected five or more days prior to the date of sampling may be regarded as a negligible risk for avian influenza and are permitted to be moved off the exempted in-contact site with a state veterinary movement permit (ordinary permit).

4.7 Where possible, the eggs should be moved off the exempted in-contact site via a gate furthest away from the infected site, taking care to properly disinfect the transport vehicle upon entry and exit from the exempted site.

4.8 The procedure above is for table eggs. If such arrangements have to be made for hatching eggs to go to a hatchery, a special application will have to be made to the DAH explaining the precautions taken at the hatchery.

5. Cleaning, disinfection, repopulation and quarantine

The responsible state veterinarian should issue an order on the affected property to ensure that all the guidelines below are taken into account during disposal, cleaning, disinfection and repopulation of the property. This is in addition to the quarantine notice that should have been issued as soon as the property was suspected or proven to be infected. As part of this order, the owner/manager of the property should be requested to supply a written protocol detailing the disposal methods, cleaning, disinfection, and repopulation plan that is specific for the property in question. This plan must be forwarded to the state veterinarian and then from the Director of Veterinary Services of that province to the Director Animal Health with initial evaluation comments. Disposal, cleaning and disinfection may only commence if the plan was approved by both the state veterinarian and the Director Animal

Health. The execution of the plan must then be supervised by the state veterinarian. When evaluating, or if asked to aid in drafting the plan, please take note of the below standards:

5.1 With regard to disposal of infected material

- a) The written protocol submitted by the owner/manager must include a detailed plan for disposal and any relevant permission from the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and/or the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS);
- b) Disposal of all affected material (carcasses, eggs, feathers, manure, bedding, feed etc.) must be performed by either composting or burial, in accordance with the specifications in point 5.1c and 5.1 d hereunder;
- c) The preferred method is of composting the affected material in the affected houses for a minimum of 21 days;
 - i. There must be temperature control and monitoring to ensure the material reaches the necessary temperature of 55°C for 3 consecutive days during composting;
 - ii. Any machinery or equipment or personnel used to stack, turn or otherwise handle the composting material must be effectively cleaned and disinfected before leaving the affected houses;
 - iii. The houses must be sealed and managed in such a manner as to prevent wild birds, pests or insects from entering the houses;
 - iv. Removal of adequately composted material from the houses and the destination of such material must be detailed.
- d) Burial of all affected material may also be undertaken;
 - i. DAFF prefers that affected material is buried on site and as close as possible to the affected houses to minimize the risk of spreading the disease off the premises. This is subject to the approval and conditions from the DEA and DWS;
 - ii. Movement of the affected material from the affected houses to the burial site must be undertaken in such a manner as to prevent environmental contamination e.g. using closed bags or bins to transport material, emptying material into burial trenches as close to the bottom of the trench as possible etc.;
 - iii. The burial site must be secured against scavengers until covered and burial trenches must be covered in such a manner as to prevent scavengers accessing the material;

- iv. Any machinery or equipment or personnel used to pack, move or otherwise handle the material must be effectively cleaned and disinfected before leaving the affected property;
- v. The plan must comply with the requirements of DEA and DWS where applicable.

5.2 With regard to the cleaning of the affected poultry farms

Cleaning refers to the physical removal of dirt etc. from the affected houses and equipment. Cleaning of the houses must only be undertaken once all of the affected material has been safely removed from the houses.

- a) All equipment and houses must be thoroughly scrubbed or scraped in such a manner as to remove all encrusted organic material and other dirt that may harbour the virus without allowing this material to enter the environment and increase the risk of environmental contamination. Disinfection may only commence after the houses and equipment are cleaned to the satisfaction of the state veterinarian.
- b) It is important not to permit the use of high pressure water hoses for initial cleaning, as these will not only dislodge the dirt but will spray it into the environment and increase potential contamination. If high pressure hoses must be used, all surfaces of the houses and equipment must first be covered with a disinfectant foam or gel effective against HPAI and left for the appropriate contact time, before cleaning commences. If high-pressure hoses are used thereafter, it is strongly recommended that the water be mixed with disinfectant.
- c) Please ensure that the effluent plan for the cleaning and disinfection process is approved by the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Water and Sanitation and that it adequately controls run-off water to limit spread of virus outside the affected houses.
- d) Ensure that there are no standing pools of water created around the houses as these will attract wild birds and the HPAI virus is capable of surviving for prolonged periods in water.

5.3 With regard to the disinfection of the affected poultry farms

Disinfection is the process of eliminating infectious organisms by using chemical or physical agents.

- a) Thorough disinfection of the houses and equipment must be undertaken at least twice:

- i. After all the carcasses, bedding and other material has been removed from the house and the equipment and house has been cleaned to the satisfaction of the state veterinarian. After disinfection, the house and equipment must be allowed to dry completely;
 - ii. Seven to ten days after the first disinfection has been completed to the satisfaction of the state veterinarian. After the disinfection, the house and equipment must again be allowed to dry completely.
- b) It is recommended that disinfection is commenced in all cases by spraying a disinfectant gel or foam effective against HPAI onto the equipment and inside the houses.
- c) Disinfectants used on houses, equipment, vehicles etc. must be registered with the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 1947 (Act no 36 of 47) and must contain compounds effective against HPAI (virucidal). It is important to ensure the recommended concentrations and contact times of these products are complied with. Please note that some disinfectant compounds may be corrosive on certain materials.
- d) Please ensure that the effluent plan for the cleaning and disinfection process is approved by the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Water and Sanitation.
- e) Ensure that there are no standing pools of water created around the houses as these will attract wild birds and the HPAI virus is capable of surviving for prolonged periods in water.

5.4 With regard to restocking and the lifting of quarantine

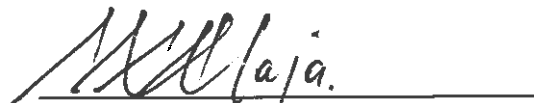
- a) The property will remain under quarantine for a minimum of 42 days after the first disinfection is completed to the satisfaction of the state veterinarian;
- b) After 21 days have elapsed since the first disinfection, the owners/managers may, with the written permission of the state veterinarian (red cross movement permit) and under state veterinary supervision, bring sentinel poultry onto the property or restock the property, under the following conditions:
 - i. Farms are advised to have a full biosecurity audit on the property performed by a veterinarian and address all recommendations

and concerns arising from this audit prior to restocking the farm with poultry;

- ii. The property is still under quarantine and no birds or products (including eggs) may be permitted to leave the property until the quarantine is lifted;
 - iii. The owner must sign that they understand restocking at this stage is at their own risk and no compensation or incentive will be paid if the birds must be culled due to HPAI;
 - iv. Clinical surveillance on the sentinels or restocked poultry during this period must be undertaken. All cases of morbidity or mortality must be reported immediately to the state veterinarian and must be sampled for HPAI.
- c) If, after the full 42 days since the first disinfection, the state veterinarian is satisfied the property is free from HPAI, the quarantine may be lifted.

We trust that you will find this information in order.

Kind regards,



Dr Mpho Maja
DIRECTOR: ANIMAL HEALTH
Date: 2017-07-24