



Avian Influenza Fact Sheet

Criteria for defining avian influenza infected areas and disease control zones

Infected place

A declared defined area (village, farm) in which highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) disease or a highly virulent strain of AI virus exists, or is believed to exist.

An 'infected place' is subject to quarantine.

Dangerous contact place

A site that contain birds, poultry products and/or poultry waste introduced from an 'infected place' within 21 days of having been declared 'infected', and/or are likely to be infected or contaminated by any item that may have been in substantial contact with people, vehicles and equipment associated with an infected premises in the three days prior to visiting the site.

Suspect place

A site that:

- contains birds that have possibly been exposed to an avian influenza virus and therefore declared subject to quarantine and surveillance, but not culling
- contains birds that are not known to have been exposed to an avian influenza virus but show clinical signs requiring differential diagnosis.

'Suspect place' is a temporary classification and the site should be treated as 'infected' until declared otherwise.

High priority should be given to clarifying the status of the suspect birds so that the 'suspect place' can be reclassified as:

- an 'infected premise', in which case appropriate quarantine and movement controls are introduced
OR
- 'free from disease', in which case no further disease control measures are required

Restricted area

A relatively small (compared to a 'control area') declared area around an 'infected place' that is subject to intense surveillance and movement controls.

In general, movement out of the area is prohibited, while movement into the area is allowed.

More than one 'restricted area' may be declared within one 'control area'.

The boundary of a 'restricted area' does not need to be circular but can have an irregular perimeter provided it is initially established at an appropriate distance from the nearest 'infected place'. This distance will vary with the size and nature of the potential source of virus and the density of poultry on the premises, but will be approximately 1–5 km around the 'infected place'.

The boundary could be the perimeter fence of an 'infected place' if it is in an isolated location. The boundary in a densely populated area will take into account the distribution of susceptible birds and traffic patterns to markets, service areas, abattoirs and areas that are natural barriers to movement.

If possible hatcheries should be kept out of a 'restricted area'.

Control area

A larger declared area around a 'restricted area' and, initially, possibly as large as a province where restrictions will reduce the risk of disease spreading from the 'restricted area'.

The boundary of a 'control area' will be adjusted as information about the extent of the outbreak becomes clearer but must remain consistent with standards on surveillance and zoning set out in the OIE Code¹ (see www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/en_chapitre_1.3.5.htm).

A 'control area' helps to limit disease spread from the 'restricted area', acting as a buffer zone between a 'restricted area' and the rest of the country. The boundary does not have to be circular or follow that of the 'restricted area' but should be 2–10 km from the boundary of the 'restricted area'.

In general, the movement of possibly contaminated things and materials within a 'control area' is allowed but movement out of the 'control area' is prohibited without the approval of the Chief veterinary Officer (CVO). In such cases, reasonable commercial activities are allowed to continue.

NOTE: The dimensions of a 'restricted area' or 'control area' must never be greater than necessary, and the number of properties to place under quarantine should be limited to those deemed prudent.

If flocks in a quarantine area are not depopulated, the cost of keeping the birds beyond their normal market age could be substantial.

International considerations

Under OIE Code¹ definitions, an 'infected area' means a clearly defined territory in which a disease (listed in the Code) has been diagnosed. This area must be clearly defined and decreed by the relevant veterinary authorities in accordance with the environment, ecological, geographical and epidemiological factors and the type of husbandry being practised.

In areas with intensive livestock raising, the radius (distance from the point where the disease broke out to the periphery) should be at least 10 km. In areas with extensive livestock raising, the radius should be at least 50 km.

Protection and surveillance zones in Europe

In June 1993, the European Union published a decision laying down the criteria for protection and surveillance zones with regard to avian influenza and Newcastle disease. Annex C point 4 of this decision states:

"Around confirmed outbreaks of disease a protection zone with a minimum radius of 3 km and a surveillance zone with a minimum radius of 10 km shall be implemented. In these zones stand still measures and controlled movements of poultry shall be in force until at least 21 days after the end of disinfection operations on the infected holding. Before lifting the measures in these zones the authorities shall carry out the necessary inquiries and sampling of the poultry holdings to confirm that disease is no longer present in the region concerned. The practicality of declaring a zone, the intensity of the industry and the transmissibility of virus causing an outbreak might mean a decision is taken to declare larger areas than those used by the EU".

Source: *Preparing for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza: A Manual for Countries at Risk*, FAO, February 2006

¹ Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
www.oie.int/eng/normes/en_mcode.htm