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Self-declaration of the recovery of country freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) by Ukraine

Declaration sent to the OIE on 24 June 2021 by Dr Olga Shevchenko, OIE Delegate for Ukraine, State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the self-declaration is the recovery of self-declared freedom from infection of high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) in accordance with the provisions of Article 10.4.6. of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (*Terrestrial Code*) for the entire country from 28 May 2021. It describes the last outbreaks of HPAI, subtype H5N8, reported to the OIE through the OIE-World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) in February 2021.

2. Avian influenza situation in Ukraine

In Ukraine, a program of active and passive monitoring has been introduced since 2004, which is in line with Chapter 10.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Between 2008-2015, Ukraine met the requirements for a "country free from avian influenza virus in poultry" in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*. According to the results of the monitoring program on the territory of Ukraine from 2016 to 27 May 2021, HPAI was registered:

- in 2016 - 4 outbreaks of HPAI (among wild birds and in non-commercial backyards),
- in 2017 - 5 outbreaks (among wild birds, zoo, in the backyards and commercial farm).
- in 2018-2019, no cases of AI were registered in Ukraine. Ukraine complied with the requirements for a "country free from avian influenza virus in poultry" in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10.4. of the *Terrestrial Code* (2019 edition).
- in 2020, 9 outbreaks of HPAI were registered in Ukraine (2 - in commercial farms and 7 - in non-commercial backyards)
- in 2021 (as of 22 June 2021), 6 outbreaks of HPAI among poultry were registered in Ukraine (1 - in a commercial farm and 5 outbreaks in non-commercial backyards).

All confirmed cases of AI were immediately reported to the OIE through WAHIS. A summary of HPAI outbreaks in 2020 to June 2021 can be found in Table 1 as Annex II.

The last outbreak of HPAI (subtype H5N8) on a commercial farm was registered on February 3, 2021 in Volnovakha district of Donetsk region.

The last outbreak of AI (H5) among poultry in a non-commercial backyard was registered on February 26, 2021 in the village of Lymany, Mykolaiv district, Mykolaiv region.

Following the confirmation of AI, in all cases a stamping-out policy was applied, including cleaning and disinfection of the infected premises, zoning, surveillance carried out in accordance Articles 10.4.26.-10.4.30. As of February 27, 2021, no other cases of notifiable AI in poultry have been detected in Ukraine.

3. Disease control measures

In response to HPAI outbreaks, Ukraine implemented a rapid and effective disease control program in order to eradicate the virus and control outbreak in accordance with the provisions of national law. The State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection (SSUFSCP), which is the competent authority in Ukraine, immediately carried out all control measures and inspections.

According to the results of epizootic investigations, the most probable source of infection in all cases was identified infected wild birds.

Measures taken during the last outbreak in non-commercial backyard:

26 February 2021: The Main Department of SSSUFSCP in Mykolaiv region reported suspicion of AI in the non-commercial backyard in the village of Lymany of the Mykolaiv (Nikolaev) region. By the decision of the chief state veterinary inspector of the Mykolaiv region, before clarification of circumstances of death of a bird and establishment of the diagnosis, quarantine restrictions were imposed immediately. The outbreak of HPAI - H5 was confirmed by the Mykolaiv State Laboratory of the SSSUFSCP (Mykolaiv).

A meeting of the State Emergency Anti-Epizootic Commission was held, the decision of which approved the plan for the elimination of the disease in accordance with the current instruction for the prevention and elimination of avian influenza¹, including quarantine, zoning, stamping out, disinfection on 26 February 2021.

In the period from 26 February to 28 February 2021, stamping-out was completed. The disease was detected in one village backyard, which housed 22 hens, but the epidemiological unit identified the entire village and the stamping out policy was applied to all birds in the village (553 birds).

Accordingly, the stamping out policy was applied in accordance with the definition in the glossary of the *Terrestrial Code*.

All waste and substances probably contaminated with the HPAI virus are destroyed (burned), and feces decontaminated by a method that guarantees the death of the influenza virus.

Measures taken during the outbreak at the commercial establishment:

The Main Department of SSUFSCP in Donetsk region reported a suspicion of AI at a commercial farm (a breeder for geese rearing) in the village of Vesele, Volnovakha district, Donetsk region on 1 February 2021. Quarantine restrictions were imposed following the decision of the Chief State Veterinary Inspector of the Donetsk region from 1 February until the circumstances of the birds' death were clarified, and a confirmatory diagnosis was made.

03 Feb 2021: confirmation of an outbreak of HPAI - type A subtype H5N8 was made by the State Scientific and Research Institute on Laboratory Diagnosis and Veterinary and Sanitary Expertise (Kyiv).

On 4 February 2021, a meeting of the State Emergency Anti-Epizootic Commission was held, the decision of which approved the plan for the eradication of the disease in accordance with the Instruction for the prevention and elimination of avian influenza¹, including quarantine, zoning, stamping out, disinfection.

In the period from 4 February to 24 February 2021, stamping-out, cleaning including final disinfection were carried out (all poultry that were in the place of the outbreak were destroyed - 1154 birds).

All waste and substances (feed, litter from infected poultry, low-value equipment, etc.) probably contaminated with the avian influenza virus are destroyed (burned), and the manure is decontaminated adopting the method described above.

Poultry products obtained during the possible date of introduction of the AI virus and the beginning of measures were traced and destroyed.

¹ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1277-11#Text>

Measures at the infected holdings included killing and disposal of all poultry on the holding in a biosecure manner, cleaning and disinfection of contaminated premises, equipment and vehicles, etc. were carried out taking into account OIE recommendations (Chapter 4.13. and Article 4.14.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*).

Measures in the restricted area included restrictions on the movement of poultry, other captive birds, and other items that could transmit the disease to and from the area. Personnel entering or leaving poultry farms in the restricted area had to comply with appropriate biosecurity measures aimed at preventing the spread of AI. All measures taken are provided by the Instruction for the prevention and elimination of avian influenza.

For the purpose of zoning, a protection zone (not less than 3 km) and a surveillance zone (not less than 10 km) have been established around all outbreaks.

Zones were established taking into account the following criteria:

- results of epizootological examination;
- features of natural boundaries;
- location and remoteness of farms, number of poultry;
- restrictions on the movement and trade in poultry and poultry products;
- observance of veterinary and sanitary rules by backyards (keeping poultry in a closed mode).

Urgent notifications are also generated, which provide information on an exhaustive list of facilities subject to restrictions on the time of quarantine. This information is distributed among all official (authorised) veterinarians and state inspectors and is published in a special section "Regionalisation and zoning" on the official website of SSUFSCP² also, this information is available to all trading partners and other stakeholders.

The following measures were applied in the protection zones (not less than 3 km):

- restrictions on the movement of poultry and poultry products have been introduced;
- accounting and epizootological inspection of all poultry farms, including non-commercial households where poultry are kept;
- a clinical examination of poultry that was in the protection zone in the first days after the outbreak and before the removal of quarantine;
- 60 samples of tracheal or 60 cloacal swabs of poultry and 20 samples of blood serum from each locality where the poultry is kept and commercial poultry farms (in case of presence) are sent to the state laboratory. Sampling is based on a risk-oriented approach.
- The information campaign was conducted among poultry owners on the prevention of avian influenza.

The following measures were applied in the surveillance zone (not less than 10 km):

- Restrictions on the movement of poultry and poultry products have been introduced.
- Accounting and epidemiological surveys of all poultry farms, including backyards where poultry is kept.
- A clinical examination of poultry in the surveillance zone in the first days after the outbreak and before the quarantine was lifted.
- Laboratory tests were performed and 60 samples of tracheal or 60 cloacal swabs of poultry and 20 samples of blood serum were sent to the state laboratory from each locality where the poultry is kept and commercial poultry farms (in case of presence). Sampling is based on a risk-oriented approach.
- Information campaign was conducted among poultry owners on the prevention of AI.

Restocking of the holding where the avian influenza was registered occurs provided that after the final disinfection, 120-day-old chickens (sentinel) were placed and kept for 21 days, after that they were killed and according to laboratory tests, no pathogens of influenza A pathogens of all serotypes were detected.

Measures of laboratory control outside the established zones

In each affected area of the region to strengthen program for the control of AI, additional laboratory tests were conducted in all commercial farms. According to the results of testing, viruses of AI were not detected.

In addition, the place of congregated of wild migratory and synanthropic birds were inspected and sampling for laboratory tests was implemented.

² <https://dpss.gov.ua/bezpechnist-harchovih-produktiv-ta-veterinarna-medicina/epizootichna-situaciya/regionalizaciya-ta-zonuvannya>

Information campaigns among farmers, citizens who keep poultry in the yards, hunters, bird transporters, etc. were conducted.

Awareness information was provided through the mass media (TV, radio, newspapers), distribution of information materials (brochures, leaflets), and on a specialized site <https://avianflu.vet.ua/>.

4. Surveillance program and early warning system

According to national legislation, avian influenza is mandatory notifiable throughout the country in accordance with the requirements of Article 33 of the Law of Ukraine on Veterinary Medicine, the Instruction for the prevention and elimination of avian influenza, the order of the State Committee of Veterinary Medicine of Ukraine dated 19 November 2008 № 264 "On approval of the List of diseases subject to mandatory notification in Ukraine".

The AI surveillance system in Ukraine is based on active and passive surveillance involving clinical, serological (the hemagglutination-inhibition test), virological, and molecular genetic (PCR) methods, which corresponds to Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

The program of laboratory surveillance including serological (the hemagglutination-inhibition test), virological, and molecular genetic (PCR) testing for AI in Ukraine is carried out in accordance with the State Plan for Monitoring of Infectious Poultry Diseases in Ukraine (hereinafter - the State Monitoring Plan).

The State Monitoring Plan is developed taking into account the target species, risk assessment and identified high-risk areas of possible emergence of highly pathogenic and low-pathogenic avian influenza.

The target groups:

- commercial poultry;
- backyard poultry;
- synanthropic birds (pigeons, crows, sparrows);
- wild migratory birds;
- zoo birds.

Avian influenza surveillance in poultry

Type of surveillance - clinical, serological (the hemagglutination-inhibition test), virological, and molecular genetic (PCR) surveillance for HPAI and LPAI (H5, H7).

Sampling criteria:

Defined target types of poultry:

- at commercial farms (poultry keeping facilities): laying hens, free-range laying hens, breeding hens, broilers; turkeys for fattening, breeding turkeys; ducks for fattening, breeding ducks, musk ducks; geese for fattening, breeding geese; quails, pheasants, peacocks, partridges, guinea fowl, pigeons, wild birds (Galliformes) kept on farms, especially adult breeding birds; wild birds (waterfowl) kept on farms; ratites, parrots;
- backyard poultry: chickens, ducks, musk ducks, geese, turkeys, wild birds (Galliformes: pheasants, quails, partridges, guinea fowl, pigeons, peacocks, as well as ornamental poultry: parrots, etc.) kept in captivity; wild waterfowl kept in captivity; ratites;
- zoo birds.

Frequency of sampling and number of samples taken at each establishment/poultry house:

Serological tests

- commercial and breeding poultry establishments, which keep poultry, except waterfowl - 5 samples from each poultry house 2 times a year;
- commercial and breeding poultry establishments, which keep waterfowl - 20 samples from each poultry house once a year;
- backyard poultry - depending on a risk zone (taking into account migration routes and temporary habitats of wild migratory birds), poultry is examined at least from 15 - 35% of localities in Ukraine - 5 samples from one locality 2 times a year (spring, autumn)
- zoo birds - 5 heads, 2 times a year from each zoo.

Virological testing

- commercial and breeding poultry establishment, which keep poultry - 5 samples from each establishment once a year.

Table 2: Results of the program of active surveillance for avian influenza							
	Total in Ukraine	Tested	serologically positive farms / settlements (H5, H7)			PCR-positive farms / settlements	
			H5	H7	H5 and H7	H5	H7
2020							
Commercial poultry farms	701	701	0	0	0	2	0
Settlements where non-commercial birds are kept	24081	7910	0	0	0	7	0
January-April 2021							
Commercial poultry farms	711	439	0	0	0	1	0
Settlements where non-commercial birds are kept	23858	3198	0	0	0	5	0

In case of suspicion or positive reaction during screening tests, samples must be examined by PCR to exclude/confirm the diagnosis.

Avian influenza surveillance in wild birds:

Type of surveillance – molecular-genetic testing (PCR).

Target subtypes of avian influenza: HPAI and LPAI (H5, H7).

Sampling criteria: in collaboration with ornithologists, migration routes of wild migratory birds were determined, maps of avian influenza risk zones were developed for each district and region of Ukraine, taking into account a significant concentration of wild birds in protected areas (reserves), density and availability of poultry on the territory of poultry establishments; the target species of wild migratory birds (Table 3) and sample size (according to Commission Decision 2010/367/EC, Commission Decision 2017/263/EC, and Commission Decision 2018/1136/EC on the implementation of the avian influenza surveillance program among domestic and wild poultry). Target species of wild birds can be found in Table 3 (Annex III).

A separate order establishes working groups for field visits to wild bird congregation sites during their migrations through the territory of Ukraine.

These groups involve veterinarians, ornithologists, hunters, and ecologists, who take samples of biomaterials from wild migratory and synanthropic birds under the commission principle.

Table 4: results of AI surveillance program among wild birds in 2021 (up to June 2021)			
	Passive surveillance	Active surveillance	Total tested
The number of birds tested	Wild– 50 heads.	Wild – 1446 heads.	Wild – 1496 heads.
	Synanthropic – 4 heads	Synanthropic – 367 heads	Synanthropic – 371 heads
Total	54	1813	1867
The number of birds detected positive for influenza A	0	0	0
The number of birds detected positive for LPAI H5	0	0	0
The number of birds detected positive for LPAI H7	0	0	0
The number of birds detected positive for HPAI H5 / H7	11	0	11

Early warning system (the system of early disease identification) is based on:

- continuous monitoring of the clinical condition of poultry, both in the private/non-commercial and commercial sectors, as well as surveys of wild migratory bird stops;
- implementing of Action Plan for measures in case of suspected avian influenza in poultry, developed for timely response to death of poultry, diagnostics, and regulation of every minute actions of the state veterinary service in case of suspicion of avian influenza in poultry (Passive Surveillance);
- In case of suspicion of AI in wild birds in each case, specialists of the state veterinary service go to the place to take samples and send them to the state laboratory to exclude or confirm AI.

5. Measures to keep the free status

Measures to confirm the status of a country free of AI meet the requirements of Article 10.4.3. of the *Terrestrial Code*, in particular:

- avian influenza is subject to mandatory notification throughout the country, there is a program of continuous notification of avian influenza, and all reports of suspected cases of avian influenza are subject to clinical and laboratory studies;
- appropriate surveillance is carried out in accordance with Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code*, to detect infection in case of absence of clinical signs in poultry and the risk posed by birds not classified as poultry;
- all epidemiological factors of avian influenza occurrence and their historical perspective are taken into account.

Imports of poultry and poultry commodities are in accordance with Articles 10.4.7. to 10.4.22. as explained below:

- Imports of poultry, poultry products and commodities are carried out in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine as of 16 November 2018 No.553 "On approving requirements for importing (sending) into the customs territory of Ukraine of live animals, their reproductive material, food products of animal origin, feed, hay, straw, as well as by-products of animal origin and products of their processing" (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0346-19#Text>), which were developed on the basis of the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code*.
- Imports of poultry and other birds, hatching eggs, poultry commodities from infected countries or zones are prohibited.
- Monitoring compliance with Veterinary and sanitary requirements for poultry keeping in poultry farms (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0565-01#Text>) and Veterinary and sanitary requirements for poultry keeping in backyards (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0042-07#Text>) is carried out to prevent infection from wild birds.

6. Conclusion

Taking into account that:

- Avian influenza is a notifiable disease in Ukraine;
- The Ukrainian surveillance program since 2004 meets the requirements Chapter 10.4. of the *Terrestrial Code* and is in place;
- A continuous disease awareness program is in place;
- Ukraine was AI-free in 2018 and 2019 and the last case registered in poultry was on 26 February 2021 was promptly and effectively addressed in accordance with the criteria of the *Terrestrial Code* – and the stamping out policy applied and completed on 28 February 2021;
- More than 28 days have elapsed since the cleaning and disinfection of contaminated premises as provided in Article 10.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code*, and no new outbreaks of HPAI have been reported in poultry and captive birds since then and according to the results of the surveillance program carried out in accordance with Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code* (2021);

The OIE Delegate of Ukraine hereby declares that the country has met the requirements for the recovery of a country freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses in poultry as of 28 May 2021, in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 1.6. and Article 10.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code* (2021 edition) and consistent with the information provided in OIE-WAHIS.

Annex I:

Statement to be included in the self-declaration document.

I, the undersigned,
Dr. Olga SHEVCHENKO.....

Delegate of...Ukraine.....

to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), takes responsibility for the self-declaration of freedom from

high pathogenicity avian influenza

..... (disease)

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Drawn up on 18.08.2021

Signature of the Delegate:



Annex II: Table 1: HPAI outbreaks in Ukraine between 2020 and June 2021.

Year	#	Location of the outbreak	Final report (OIE Report ID)	ID of the outbreak in the report
2020	1	Vynnytsia region, Nemyriv district, Bugakiv village (PE " Khutir ")	IN_32998	1000125682-Buhakiv
	2	Mykolaiv region, Novoodesky district, Kandybyne village	IN_36887	1000140429-Kandybyne
	3	Mykolaiv region, Novoodesky district, Novomatviivske village	FUR_37080	1000141072-Novomatviivske
	4	Kyiv region, Ivankiv district, Leonivka village	IN_37295	1000141913-Leonivka
	5	Mykolaiv region, Ochakiv district, Yaselka village	FUR_37316	1000142035-Yaselka
	6	Kyiv region, Borodyanka district, Borodyanka township	FUR_37331	1000142087-Borodianka
	7	Kherson region, Kakhovka district, Zaozerne village	IN_37371	1000142309-Zaozerne
	8	Mykolaiv region, Mykolaiv district, Trykhaty village	FUR_37376	1000142332-Trykhaty
	9	Mykolaiv region, Arbuzynskiy district, PE "Blahodatnenskyi ptakhoprom", Ivanivka village	FUR_37376	1000142333-Ivanivka
2021	1	Mykolaiv region, Domanivka district, Domanivka township	FUR_37653	1000143518-Domanivka
	2	Kyiv region, Hostomel village	FUR_37717	1000143884-Hostomel
	3	Donetsk region, Volnovakha district (former Velykonovosilkivskiy district), agrariran holding "S-Kolos"	FUR_38087	1000145591-Vesele
	4	Donetsk region, Volnovakha district (former Velykonovosilkivskiy district), Vesele village	FUR_38160	1000146221-Vesele
	5	Kyiv region, Bucha district, Klavdiyevo-Tarasove township	FUR_38288	1000146802-Klavdiievo-Tarasove
	6	Mykolaiv region, Mykolaiv district, Halytsynivska village territorial community, Lymany village	FUR_149152	ob_82899-Lymany

Annex III: Target species of wild birds for the implementation of the surveillance program of AI

#	Scientific Name	General Name
1	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Goshawk
2	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Sparrow hawk
3	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Northern pintail
4	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Common shoveler
5	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Common teal
6	<i>Anas penelope</i>	European wigeon
7	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard
8	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Garganey
9	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall
10	<i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>	Greater white-fronted goose (European rasa)
11	<i>Anser anser</i>	Grey lag goose
12	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Pink-footed goose
13	<i>Anser erythropus</i>	Lesser white-fronted goose
14	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Bean-geese
15	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey heron
16	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Common pochard
17	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Tufted duck
18	<i>Ciconia buteo</i>	Common buzzard
19	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Roughleg
20	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	White swan
21	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Marsh harrier