

DISCLAIMER

The OIE, after performing an administrative and technical screening of a self-declaration concerning the disease-free status of a country, a zone or a compartment (“self-declaration”), as described in the standard operating procedures for self-declarations, reserves the right to publish or not the self-declaration on its website. There shall be no right of appeal from this decision nor any recourse of any kind.

The publication by the OIE of a self-declaration on its website does not reflect the official opinion of the OIE.

Responsibility for the information contained in a self-declaration lies entirely with the OIE Delegate of the Member concerned.

Neither the OIE nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for:

- (i) any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in the content of a self-declaration,
- (ii) the use which may be made of the information contained in a self-declaration;
- (iii) any direct or indirect consequences of any nature arising from or relating to the use of the information contained in a self-declaration.

Self-declaration of the recovery of freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) in poultry in the Czech Republic

Self-Declaration sent to the OIE on 26 July 2021 by Dr Zbyněk Semerád, the Delegate of Czech Republic to the OIE, Director General State Veterinary Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic.

I. Introduction

In accordance with the OIE procedure for publication of self-declaration of freedom from a disease and Chapter 1.6. of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (*Terrestrial Code*), the State Veterinary Administration of the Czech Republic is submitting the following documentation for publication by the OIE, attesting that the Czech Republic has regained country freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) for the entire territory of the Czech Republic from 26 July 2021 in accordance with Article 10.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The self-declaration describes 37 outbreaks of HPAI which were confirmed in the Czech Republic between 22 January and 18 May 2021. The previous occurrences of HPAI in poultry were in January and February 2020. Vaccination against avian influenza is prohibited in the Czech Republic.

II. Evidence that avian influenza is a notifiable disease in the Czech Republic

The poultry holdings in the Czech Republic are registered in the Farm Database according to the provisions of the Act No. 154/2000, Breeding Act and corresponding Decree of Ministry of Agriculture No. 136/2004.

HPAI is a notifiable disease according to the [§ 10 of the Veterinary Act No. 166/1999 Coll](#) and is listed in Annex II “Contagious Diseases and Diseases Communicable from Animals to Humans Considered as Dangerous” to the Act herein.

Control measures for HPAI in poultry, other captive birds and wild birds are laid down in the following European Union (EU) legislation and national legislation:

Until 20 April 2021

- [Council Directive 2005/94/EC](#) (implemented by Decree No. 36/2007 Coll.)
- [Commission Decision 2006/437/EC](#)
- Veterinary Act No. 166/1999 Coll.

Since 21 April 2021

- [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of The Council \(“Animal Health Law”\)](#)
- [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/687](#)
- [Veterinary Act No. 166/1999 Coll.](#)¹

Control measures implemented in case of an outbreak in poultry are in accordance with the Chapter 10.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*:

- all suspected cases of avian influenza are immediately investigated by the official veterinarians;
- all poultry on the affected holding are culled and carcasses are disposed of;
- cleaning and disinfection after the culling;
- an epidemiological investigation is conducted, and all contacts are traced and investigated;
- a protection zone (radius 3 km) and a surveillance zone (radius 10 km) are established.

III. Control measures for HPAI outbreaks

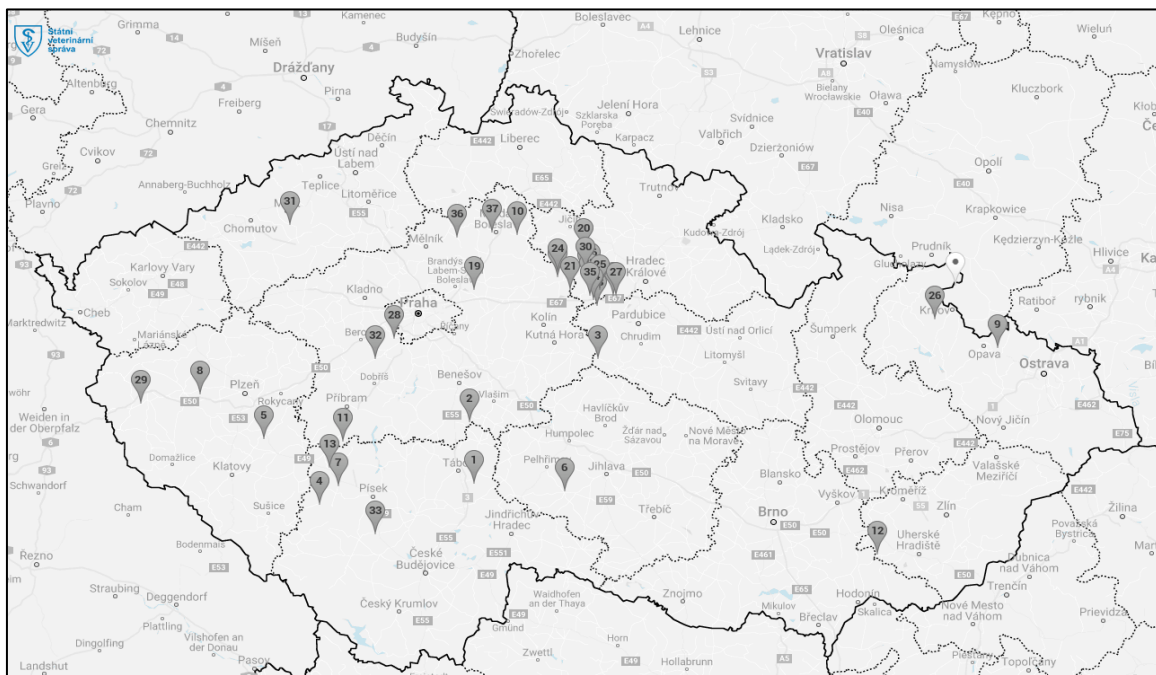
The first HPAI outbreak of subtype H5N8 was confirmed in a mixed backyard flock on 22 January 2021 in Dlouhá Lhota in the South Bohemian Region and the last HPAI outbreak was confirmed on 18 May 2021 in Čejetice in the Central Bohemian Region. From 22 January to 18 May 2021, a total of 37 HPAI outbreaks of subtype H5N8² were detected in nine out of 14 regions of the Czech Republic (Figure 1). The outbreaks were detected in both backyard flocks and commercial holdings (duck breeders, laying hens). On 3 April 2021 one HPAI outbreak of subtype H5N8 was confirmed in captive birds in Ústí nad Labem Region. A summary of the HPAI outbreaks in 2021 can be found in Table 1 as Annex II.

Culling of animals and preliminary cleaning and disinfection in the last HPAI outbreak (37th) in Čejetice were performed on 19 May 2021. The final cleaning and disinfection were performed on 28 June 2021 and the surveillance zone established around this outbreak was lifted on 18 June 2021.

Within the territory of the Czech Republic, there are currently no active outbreaks or established restricted zones.

An immediate notification and follow-up reports (including the final report) were sent to the OIE World Animal Health Information System (OIE-WAHIS) and can be found on the OIE website.

Figure 1: Localisation of HPAI outbreaks in poultry in the Czech Republic.



¹ Available only in Czech

² The last outbreak was resolved on 28/05/2021 and the event is considered closed on the OIE-WAHIS

All outbreaks in backyard flocks and the outbreak in a commercial laying hen holding were detected either on the basis of a report from a farmer or a private veterinarian based on increased mortality of poultry and were communicated to the veterinary authority. Most suspicions in commercial duck breeder holdings were reported on the basis of drop in egg production.

After each report of suspect cases of avian influenza, official veterinarians checked the concerned holding and took samples for laboratory testing, mainly from either dead birds or birds with clinical signs. Veterinary measures were immediately enforced. In order to prevent spread of the virus and to eradicate the disease, the Regional Veterinary Administration of the State Veterinary Administration after confirmation of HPAI ordered emergency veterinary measures and established protection zones (radius 3 km) and surveillance zones (radius 10 km) around outbreaks. All commercial holdings in protection zones were checked by official veterinarians who carried out clinical examination, as soon as possible after confirmation of the outbreak. If necessary, samples were taken for a laboratory testing according to the Diagnostic Manual (Commission Decision 2006/437/EC).

All control measures taken by the State Veterinary Administration were in accordance with EU legislation. All birds in outbreaks were culled on-site and carcasses were transported and destroyed in rendering plants. Ban of movements of poultry, birds, eggs, meat, etc. from the outbreaks and to the outbreaks, without the permission of the relevant competent authority, and the ban of any movements of live and slaughtered poultry, other birds, eggs, meat, etc. in protection zones and surveillance zones were ordered. Preliminary and final cleaning and disinfection were carried out. After performing all ordered measures, the emergency veterinary measures were lifted.

IV. Surveillance and early warning system

The Czech surveillance programme and strategy in order to demonstrate freedom is in accordance with Chapter 1.4. on Animal Health Surveillance and Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Passive surveillance for avian influenza in poultry has been in place since 2005 – early warning system. According to the Veterinary Act No 166/1999 Coll. as amended, all farmers have to report disease suspicions (high mortality or clinical signs) to the competent veterinary authority. Farmers with commercial holdings have the obligation to record the changes in poultry health according to the Veterinary Act and Decree No. 342/2012 Coll. In case of unusual changes in poultry health, farmers have to contact the competent veterinary authority. The following changes in poultry health are mandatory to be notified:

- drop in feed and water intake higher than 20 %,
- drop in egg production higher than 5 % for more than two days,
- mortality rate higher than 3 % in a week,
- any clinical sign or post-mortem lesion suggesting avian influenza.

All suspected cases of avian influenza are investigated immediately by the veterinary authorities. When an official veterinarian checks a holding where an outbreak is suspected, the following measures are carried out: a check of the production and health records of the holding, a clinical inspection of the birds and sampling. The testing of samples is carried out at the National Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza.

Active surveillance programme in poultry

In the Czech Republic the “Avian influenza surveillance programme for poultry and wild birds for 2021 year” is implemented in compliance with the requirements of [Commission Decision 2010/367/EU](#).

Active surveillance for:

- a) Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI), subtypes H5 and H7, in gallinaceous birds (namely Gallus gallus f. domestica, turkeys, guinea fowl, pheasants, partridges and quails) thereby complementing other existing early detection systems in gallinaceous birds;

This surveillance has the purpose of obtaining information on circulation of avian influenza viruses in poultry farms through active monitoring. In domestic poultry, there is a possibility that LPAI viruses circulate undetected, as clinical cases are often mild or absent. However, the risk is known that H5 and H7 subtype strains of LPAI circulating in poultry flocks, can mutate into HPAI strains.

- b) LPAI, subtypes H5 and H7, and HPAI in domestic waterfowl (namely ducks, geese and mallards for re-stocking supplies of game);

The surveillance programme is applied on the whole territory of the Czech Republic, so that samples are considered representative. The programme is implemented in all 14 regions in the Czech Republic. All regions are divided into the smaller areas – districts.

Samples are taken by official veterinarians or by approved private veterinarians who are in charge of taking official samples.

The following target populations are included in the sero-prevalence survey: laying hens, free range laying hens, chicken breeders, turkey breeders, duck breeders, geese breeders, fattening turkeys, fattening ducks, fattening geese, farmed game birds (gallinaceous) and farmed game birds (waterfowl). Samples are collected from all production categories of poultry and all poultry species. Samples from ten birds (except ducks, geese and mallards) are taken at each tested poultry holding, and from the different sheds, where more than one shed is present in a holding. In case of holdings with waterfowls, twenty blood samples are taken for serological testing from each selected holding. ELISA test is used for initial serological screening of blood samples in poultry. In the case of positive ELISA reaction, typing by HI test (haemagglutination inhibition test) is performed. If HI tests confirm H5 or H7 antibodies, an epidemiological investigation and sampling for testing by virological methods (RT-PCR) is performed on a poultry holding.

In 2021, a total of 980 samples were examined from a total of 70 poultry holdings. The overall results of active surveillance in poultry in 2021 are reported in Table 2. Five poultry holdings were positive for H5 antibodies, but no virus was detected.

Table 2: Avian influenza serological surveillance (H5/H7) from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021 in the Czech Republic

Category of poultry	No. of sampled holdings	No. of samples (blood)	Results
Laying hens	20	200	negative
Free range laying hens	3	30	negative
Geese breeders	2	40	negative
Duck Breeders	13	260	negative
Fattening turkeys	11	110	negative
Fattening ducks	7	140	negative
Farmed game birds (gallinaceous)	8	80	negative
Farmed game birds (waterfowl)	8	160	negative
Total	72	1 020	negative

Active intensified surveillance was carried out after stamping out policy and preliminary disinfection in outbreak in line with Article 10.4.28. of the *Terrestrial Code*. The active surveillance included official checks in poultry holdings in protection zones selected on the basis of risk analysis. The risk factors were especially: the number of birds kept on the holding, the holdings located close to water bodies, the holdings with poultry of different age groups or different poultry species, the holdings epidemiologically linked to the outbreaks and the holdings close to the outbreaks etc. The results of intensified surveillance carried out in protection zones established around HPAI outbreaks (poultry, captive birds) are reported in Table 3.

Surveillance programme in wild birds

Surveillance for HPAI in wild bird is implemented as a passive surveillance system by laboratory investigation of moribund wild birds or birds found dead. Surveillance is specifically directed towards target species listed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Cloacal and tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs or tissues from wild birds are taken for virological testing (PCR) in the State Veterinary Institutes.

In 2021, a total of 154 wild birds have been examined between 1 January and 30 June 2021. In 2021, a total of 49 HPAI positive wild birds have been detected in 9 out of 14 regions of the Czech Republic. So far HPAI has been detected in the following species: 40 mute swans (*Cygnus olor*), 7 mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), 1 greylag goose

(*Anser Anser*) and 1 white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*). The H5N8 subtype of HPAI has been detected in most positive cases, only in one case H5N5 subtype of HPAI has been detected in one mute swan in Zlín Region.

Table 3: Avian influenza virological surveillance in poultry in protection zones around outbreaks from 22 January 2021 to 9 June 2021

Region	No. of checked holdings	No. of samples (tracheal/ oropharyngeal and cloacal swabs)	Results*
Central Bohemian	76	2 394	negative
South Bohemian	53	1 368	negative
Plzeň	24	624	negative
Ústí nad Labem	8	254	negative
Hradec Králové	109	1 756	negative
Pardubice	49	989	negative
Vysočina	19	504	negative
Moravian-Silesian	16	458	negative
Zlín	8	208	negative
South Moravian	4	54	negative
Total	366	8 609	negative

*RT-PCR AIV used for virological testing

V. Measures implemented to maintain freedom

Awareness campaign and risk mitigation measures

Information of the epidemiological situation related to avian influenza and recommendations and guidance to keepers of poultry and other captive birds, hunters, veterinarians and general public have been published on the website of the State Veterinary Administration and shared via social media and press releases. Information has also been sent by official letters to official and private veterinarians and poultry organisations and other stakeholders. Several meetings of the avian influenza expert group have been held.

The State Veterinary Administration issued emergency veterinary measures for the whole territory of the Czech Republic to control a spread of HPAI on 26 January 2021 which were in force until 30 April 2021. Keeping of poultry (in commercial holdings) in open air was prohibited, unless the birds or feed and drinking water were protected against contact with wild birds with nets and roofs. The gathering of poultry and other captive birds at shows, exhibitions, competitions and other similar events was prohibited. The restriction of poultry movements was in force.

The following requirements for commercial poultry holdings have been in force in the whole country (Decree No 342/2012 Coll.):

- the feed and drinking water for poultry shall be arranged indoors or in a place where wild waterfowl cannot reach;
- prohibition of keeping waterfowl together with other poultry or captive birds;
- holdings shall be protected against wild birds and other animals.

Import of poultry and poultry products

All imports and intra-Community trade of poultry, poultry products and hatching eggs are subject to veterinary certification and controls in accordance with the EU legislation Council Directive 2009/158/EC (until 20 April 2021), Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2035, Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (since 21 April 2021) and in accordance with the requirements of the Articles 10.4.7.to 10.4.22. of the *Terrestrial Code*. When poultry and other birds, hatching eggs, poultry meat, table eggs and products thereof are imported from non-EU-countries, consignments must be accompanied by an animal health certificate.

VI. Conclusions

Considering that:

- Avian influenza is a notifiable disease in the Czech Republic;
- Prior to the occurrence of HPAI outbreaks in 2021, the Czech Republic was free from avian influenza viruses in poultry from 12 June 2020;
- Stamping out policy was applied (including cleaning and disinfection of all affected holdings);
- 28 days have elapsed as stipulated in Article 10.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code* since the completion of the final disinfection of the last affected holding;
- The surveillance has been carried out in accordance with Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- Ongoing avian influenza awareness programme and national rules for biosecurity measures are in place.

The OIE Delegate of the Czech Republic declares that the country complies with the requirements to declare recovery of freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) in poultry as of 26 July 2021, in accordance with Chapter 1.6. and Article 10.4.6. of the *Terrestrial Code* (2021 edition) and consistent with the information provided to the OIE-WAHIS.

Statement to be included in the self-declaration document.

I, the undersigned,
..... Zbyněk Semerád, DVM, Director General (CVO)

Delegate of..... **the Czech Republic**

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

..... **high pathogenicity avian influenza in poultry**

..... (disease)

DISCLAIMER

The OIE, after performing an administrative and technical screening of a self-declaration concerning the disease-free status of a country, a zone or compartment ("self-declaration"), as described in the standard operating procedures for self-declarations, reserves the right to publish or not the self-declaration on its website. There shall be no right of appeal from this decision or any recourse of any kind.

The publication by the OIE of self-declaration on its website does not reflect the official opinion of the OIE. Responsibility for the information contained in a self-declaration lies entirely with the OIE Delegate of the Member concerned.

Neither the OIE nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for:

- (i) Any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in the content of a self-declaration,
- (ii) The use which may be made of the information contained in a self-declaration;
- (iii) Any direct or indirect consequences of any nature arising from or relating to the use of the information contained in a self-declaration.

Drawn up on 26. 7. 2021

Signature of the Delegate:



Table 1: Summary of HPAI outbreaks in 2021

Poultry		
Outbreak		Region
1. Dlouhá Lhota	backyard flock	South Bohemian
2. Podolí u Jankova	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
3. Ronov nad Doubravou	backyard flock	Pardubice
4. Katovice	backyard flock	South Bohemian
5. Bzí	backyard flock	Plzeň
6. Horní Cerekev	backyard flock	Vysočina
7. Rojice	backyard flock	South Bohemian
8. Hněvnice	backyard flock	Plzeň
9. Velké Hoštice	backyard flock	Moravian-Silesian
10. Březno	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
11. Počaply	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
12. Osvětimany	backyard flock	Zlín
13. Blatná	backyard flock	South Bohemian
14. Dobřenice	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
15. Zábědov	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
16. Chudonice	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
17. Vinice	commercial duck holding	Central Bohemian
18. Vápno	commercial duck holding	Pardubice
19. Čelákovice	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
20. Vysoké Veselí	backyard flock	Hradec Králové
21. Slibovice	commercial duck holding	Central Bohemian
22. Kosičky-Třesice	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
23. Luková	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
24. Záhornice	commercial duck holding	Central Bohemian
25. Kosičky	commercial laying hen holding	Hradec Králové
26. Loučky u Zátoru	backyard flock	Moravian-Silesian
27. Dobřenice	backyard flock	Hradec Králové
28. Třebotov	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
29. Vysočany u Boru	backyard flock	Plzeň
30. Starý Bydžov	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
31. Polerady	backyard flock	Ústí nad Labem
32. Hodyně	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
33. Vodňany	backyard flock	South Bohemian
34. Klamoš	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
35. Nové Město	commercial duck holding	Hradec Králové
36. Chorušice	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
37. Čejetice	backyard flock	Central Bohemian
Protection and surveillance zones established due to the HPAI outbreak in Poland near the Czech-Polish border		Moravian-Silesian

Captive birds		
1. Razice	backyard flock	Ústí nad Labem