

FW: Updated measures to protect poultry against Avian Flu

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From: Nicola Pearce**To:** Nicola Pearce**Hi All,****DEFRA have made a sudden change to the Protection Regulation as follows;-****Thank you*****Updated measures to protect poultry against Avian Flu***

All poultry in England to be allowed outside from Thursday 13 April following the latest evidence on the risk posed by wild birds.

All poultry in England are to be allowed outside from Thursday 13 April 2017 following updated evidence on the risk posed by wild birds, the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has announced.

The requirement to keep poultry in Higher Risk Areas of England housed or completely enclosed in netting, introduced to minimise the risk of them catching avian flu from wild birds, will be lifted. However, all keepers in England will continue to be required to comply with strict biosecurity measures.

A ban on poultry gatherings also remains in force until further notice.

The decision to lift the additional requirements in the Higher Risk Areas is based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice, which concludes that the level of risk to poultry in these areas has now reduced to the same level as that across the rest of England. This is because of changes in the wild bird population: the majority of over-wintering migratory birds have now left the UK, and resident wild waterfowl are at their lowest levels and entering the breeding season when they become less likely to move long distances to forage for food.

The risk of poultry becoming infected from H5N8 remains heightened and countries across Europe continue to

experience outbreaks and observe cases in wild birds. Defra is stepping up surveillance of wild birds across the UK to inform our risk assessments.

All poultry keepers must continue to take steps to reduce the risk to their birds, including minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors.

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