

Q & A Avian Flu

Q: I have seen a dead swan at....? What should I do?

A: Dead swans should be reported to DEFRA for investigation on 08459 335577. In relation to other types of wild bird DEFRA will only investigate if multiple deaths eg 4-5 unusual deaths in same area.

Q: I am a poultry keeper and some of my birds have died unexpectedly. What should I do?

A: Contact your private veterinary surgeon. If notifiable disease cannot be ruled out contact DEFRA on 08459 335577.

Q: Is there a vaccine for avian flu?

A: There are vaccines available, DEFRA will consider their use if an outbreak occurs.

Q: If the H5N1 virus is found in wild birds will all domestic birds have to be housed?

A: DEFRA will make a decision based on risk assessment but it is likely that domestic birds would be housed. This may be within the infected area only or could be nationally.

Q: I have seen on the news reports of swans being taken for testing from Lancashire does this mean that they have Avian Flu?

A: No. These birds have been taken as part of DEFRA's disease surveillance program Not because they are suspected of having disease. Since January 2004 over 3500 birds have been sampled throughout the UK and none have tested positive for H5N1 virus..

Note: Even though there is no current evidence of avian flu being present in the UK poultry keepers are advised that good bio security procedures are invaluable to prevent the spread of any infections, this includes feeding poultry under cover to reduce contact with wild birds.

Members of the public who need to remove dead birds which have died from other causes, road kills, birds killed by pets etc. should always exercise good personal hygiene practice and use disposable gloves or other equipment which should be cleansed and disinfected after use. This will help prevent the spread of any infection which wildlife may carry.

Further information is available from the DEFRA website.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm>

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