

Low pathogenic influenza H3N1 in poultry

Belgium

PAFF Committee 12-13 June 2019



Timeline

- First case detected in January 2019
 - In the framework of the avian influenza surveillance programme
 - Flock of outdoor laying hens
 - LPAI H3N1, but brain was positive in PCR
 - Depopulation on initiative of the farmer
- 6 April: the same farm is infected again
- Quick rise of the number of cases since last week of April



Current situation

- H3 influenza confirmed in 71 poultry farms by PCR
 - of which 6 confirmed as H3N1



Clinical symptoms

- Eggshell defects (discoloring)
- Depression
- Severe drop in egg production
- Severe drop in feed intake
- Increasing mortality (25-30%), up to 60%
- Sometimes slowly spreading
- Sometimes no clinical symptoms at all
- Delayed restart of laying after recovery and low egg production



The virus

- Avian influenza virus H3N1
- IVPI 0.13 : low pathogenic
- Genetically related to a strain isolated from a wild bird in the Netherlands 2017
- Adaptation to chickens
- Predilection for ovaries and oviduct



Epidemiological investigation

- Clustering of cases in the provinces of West Flanders and East Flanders
- No common link between the affected farms
- No common other pathogen that causes the disease (IB, E. coli, ...)
- Farms with breeders, laying hens, broilers and meat turkeys
 - 27 breeders, 30 laying hens, 7 turkeys, 6 broiler, 1 ostrich



Measures taken

- Not listed disease
- Previously no specific legislation in place
- Temporary legal measures applicable since 16 May 2019:
 - Reinforced passive surveillance
 - Cleaning and disinfection of all vehicles entering or leaving a poultry farm
 - 1-1 transport of poultry
 - Restricted access to poultry farms and hatcheries (personnel, farm veterinarian, authorities)
 - Disinfection of manure



Measures to be taken

- Temporary legal measures applicable in very short term:
 - Restricted access to egg storage room in poultry farms
 - Pre-movement testing of young laying hens, breeding hens and breeding cocks before transport to other farms
 - Post-movement testing of young laying hens, breeding hens and breeding cocks at the farm of destination
 - Testing of breeding hens before transport of hatching eggs to a hatchery
 - Mandatory treatment of eggs of infected breeding farms: no eggs sent to hatchery



Measures to be taken

- Temporary legal measures applicable in very short term:
 - Healthy poultry of infected farms may only be transported to the slaughterhouse
 - After depopulation, infected farms have to be cleaned and disinfected. Empty period of at least 21 days
 - All egg trays and other equipment used in infected farms must be cleaned and disinfected twice before re-use in other farms



Thank you for your attention

