Mission of the Veterinary Emergency Team (EU VET) Avian Influenza Poland

29 – 31 January 2020

Objective

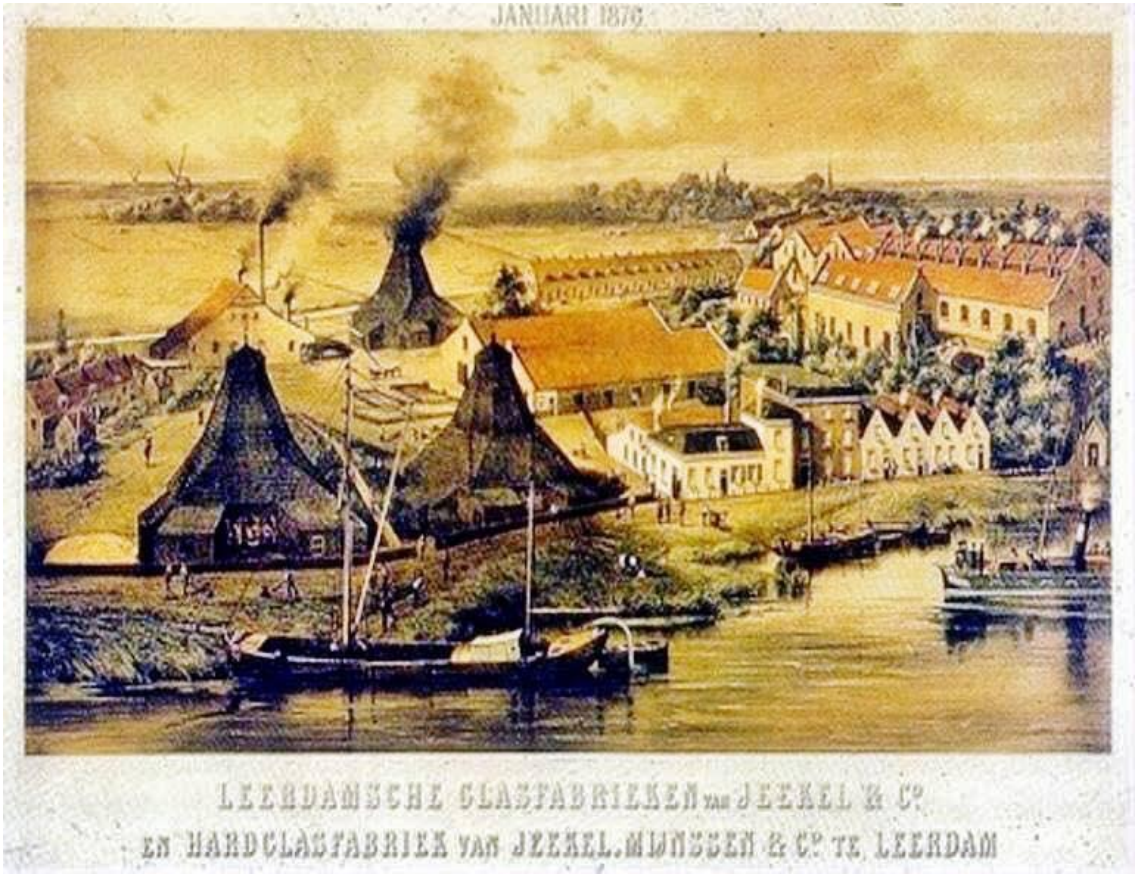
Reason:

The experts should provide scientific, technical, managerial and practical assistance on the spot on the refinement of the most suitable control and eradication measures for Avian Influenza (AI) under local conditions, especially as regards epidemiological investigations and comprehensive management of the restricted areas, including timely reporting of positive cases to prevent further spread.

Experts:

Wim Pelgrim (Ministry of Agriculture, the Netherlands)
Paolo Mulatti (EU reflab, Italy)

No audit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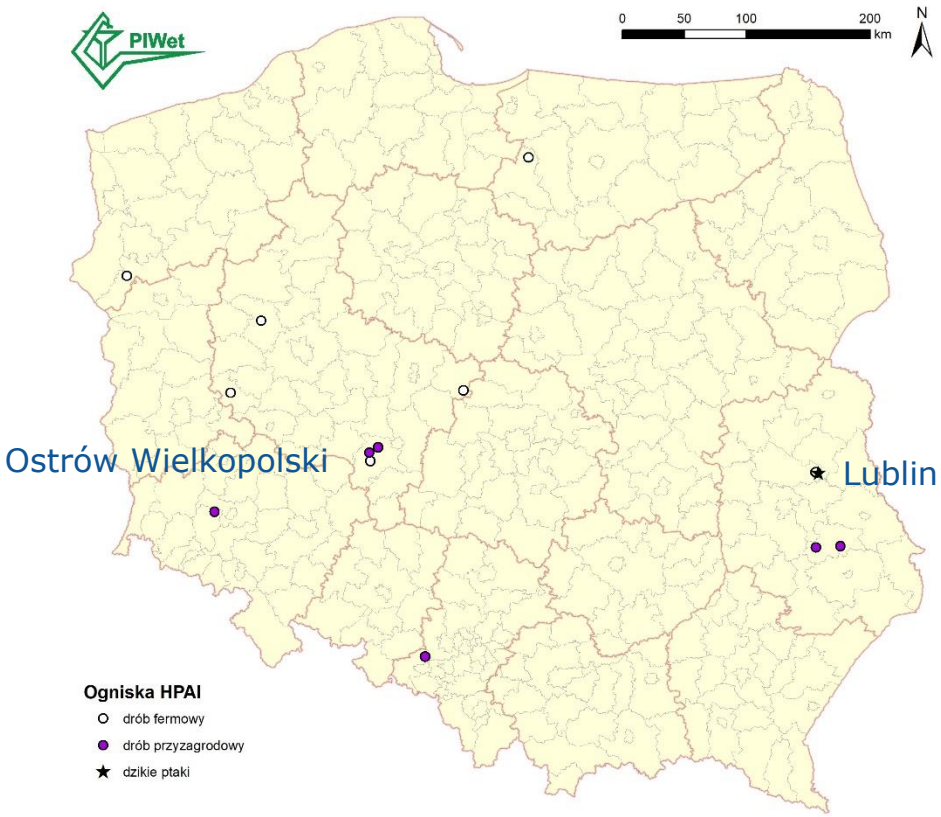
1. E-PI-DE-MI-O-LO-GY

2. PREVENTION

3. CONTROL



outbreaks confirmed until 31 January 2020
(3 outbreaks in 2019 + 17 outbreaks in 2020 as of 31 January). In few districts, one dot includes more outbreak if there were close, such as lubartowski district in lubelskie region.
White dot = commercial farms; violet dot = backyard farms, star = wild bird

Programme

29th January: Ostrowski district

30th January: Lublin (and Lubartów) and Pulawi

31st January Warsaw

Content report

1. Poultry farming in Poland
2. Epidemiology
3. HPAI prevention and control

Strong aspects

Aspects that may be improved

1. Poultry farming in Poland - Findings

* *Poultry farming is a fast growing activity*
* *Most important subsector is broiler production followed by fattening turkey*
* *Important part is traded outside of Poland.*
* *Densely populated poultry areas (DPPA) and very large production units esxist*
* *Considerable number of backyard farms.*
* *Sometimes poultry farms are very near (<50 m)*

Conclusions and recommendations

Poland has the largest poultry production of the EU

In granting licenses for renovation or construction of existing or new poultry houses, it could be considered taking into account aspects on biosecurity and proximity to other poultry farms

2. Epidemiology – Findings

** From the 31th of December 2019 until 31th of January, 20 outbreaks HPAI H5N8 have been notified*

** Introduction routes cannot be determined with 100% certainty (example outbreaks Lubelskie region)*

** Other outbreaks seem to origin from wild birds (important water reservoirs exist in Poland)*

** No hard evidence to prove the introduction routes.*

** Poultry of relatively open farm systems and backyard is in general more likely to get infected by wild birds*

Epidemiology – Findings 2

** Turkeys seem to be very sensitive (introduction and mortality). In other species clear clinical signs have been observed.*

** Risk maps based on the presence of target (risk) species have been drafted outbreaks however these maps have not been (fully) used*

** Circulating virus belongs to the same clade as the one in 2016/17 but with some modifications, indicating a novel introduction.*

Conclusions and recommendations

* *Clear clinical symptoms facilitate early detection of HPAI*
* *Geographical riskmaps are available*

* *Epidemiological investigation of suspected and infected farms is not always very thorough. Consider strengthening scientific epidemiological support, including wild bird ecology:*
  - Timely publication of a guidance
  - Strengthening passive surveillance in outbreak situation
  - Molecular epidemiology

3. HPAI prevention and control - Findings

** Organization of the Veterinary Service in Poland has three levels: central, regional and **district**.*

** Staff capacity and quality district and regional is sufficient (procedures to increase staff capacity exist).*

** Three categories of kept birds/poultry concerning registration (backyard farms is a concern)*

** Pace of detecting - implementing the protection and surveillance zone is well in most cases.*

Findings 2

*Procedures for financial compensation work well

* Preventive culling is practiced if necessary.

* DVO (and also production boards) puts a lot of effort in training activities and awareness on topics related to HPAI

* NRL is very well prepared but in crisis situations the number of personnel does not always allow deeper investigation

Conclusions and recommendations

Positive:

** Pace notification – culling is fast*

** Enough staff quality and capacity in districts*

** Good system for financial compensation*

Improvement:

** Registration (clear definitions, threshold number, central database)*

** Continue training activities and updating detailed contingency plan (application biosecurity, application of preventive culling*

** Strict confinement of poultry in high risk areas and prohibition captive bird markets and exhibitions*

** Ban activities/transports with a considerable risk (like the transport of dead poultry to other farms) during risk periods*

The EU VET team wish to thank all colleagues from Poland for their support and help given.

The working atmosphere during the mission was very good. The colleagues from Poland gave all their support and assistance to facilitate a fruitful mission.