Beat: Miscellaneous

Germany reports second case of H5N8 bird flu

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USPA News - A wild bird in northern Germany has tested positive for the highly pathogenic H5N8 bird flu strain, making it the country`s second and Europe`s seventh case, authorities said on Saturday, calling on all poultry farms across Germany to keep their animals inside. The latest case of H5N8 was found in a Eurasian teal as part of a monitoring program in Vorpommern-RÃƒ¼gen district in the northern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

"We now have a new, unpleasant situation. We must now speak of a Europe-wide outbreak," said Dr. Till Backhaus, the state`s agriculture minister. The new case is the first to be found among wild birds in Europe, confirming previous suspicions that the bird flu virus was brought to Europe by migratory birds from Asia. "I therefore call on all poultry farmers, in their own best interest, to prevent any possible contact between poultry and wild birds," Dr. Backhaus said, urging poultry farmers across the country to keep their animals indoors. The bird flu outbreaks in Europe began earlier this month when a turkey tested positive for H5N8 at a farm in northeastern Germany, after which all susceptible birds present at the farm were destroyed. A second outbreak was found at a poultry farm in the Netherlands on November 15, followed by outbreaks at three additional farms over the past week. The outbreaks in the Netherlands have forced authorities there to implement a series of measures, including a nationwide ban on the movement of poultry and eggs, bringing the Dutch poultry industry to a nearly complete standstill. A seventh case was also found at a duck breeding farm in northern England earlier this week. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) said on Wednesday that the H5N8 virus found in Europe is closely related to the strain found in South Korea. "The OIE suspects that the virus was carried by wild birds from Asia - where the virus was found before the recent cases in Europe - to Germany, Netherlands and the UK," said OIE spokeswoman Catherine Bertrand-Ferrandis. Wild birds are known to be able to carry bird flu viruses without getting sick and their migratory flyways sometimes result in outbreaks along their path. But the virus can also spread from farm to farm on the shoes or clothing of workers, by the movement of domestic live birds, and through contaminated vehicles, equipment, food, and cages.

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