MASSEY FEEDS
Focused on nutrition

feedtalk

POULTRY SPECIAL

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AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE

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Cases of Avian Influenza (AI) are rising rapidly across the UK, with cases identified in many backyard flocks of captive birds, wild birds, pheasants, Christmas turkeys and free range hens.

Producers might be sick of constantly being told to improve bio-security on all poultry units including turkeys, but I still come across units that have done nothing to reduce the risk of the disease entering the site.

AI is spread by contact with infected material i.e. faeces, secretions (nasal) and blood. Poultry keepers must be extra vigilant and implement robust biosecurity measures because if a flock gets it, it is devastating!

Measures that you should implement as a minimum include:-

- Restricting or preventing access of people. If they are necessary then detailed visitor records are essential.
- Wild birds are the main source of infection either directly or indirectly and must be prevented from entering the building at all cost.
- Making sure bedding is stored free from contamination by wild birds. Litter material is considered the biggest cause of bringing the disease into a building either via the materials or the equipment used to spread it.
- Provide foot dips at the entrance to all poultry buildings. Better still, have a designated area for the changing of footwear before entry to poultry sheds.
- Rodents are known carriers of the disease so vermin protect buildings and clean up feed spills immediately.
- Maintain all rooves as leaking roofs have been implicated in the disease getting in. Moss on roofs attracts wild birds and helps retain contaminated faeces which can then be slowly washed off and enter the building through a hole in the roof.
- Poorly maintained aprons to the building are impossible to disinfect.
- Keep chickens and turkeys separate from ducks and geese and limit access to ponds etc.

Should you become an infected premises the amount of record keeping required as the APHA try to trace movements on and off the unit is significant. They will demand a three month history of mortality, feed, water production and visitors' records.

The AI season is still in its infancy and APHA are struggling to issue the licences which are essential for the movement of livestock, bird depletions, fallen stock, manure, hatching eggs and processed poultry.

Last year a 'general' licence was implemented which allowed the movement of table eggs to packing stations, removing the need for producers to apply for individual licences for the movement of such eggs. Currently, no general licence has been granted and so individual licences are required for each category above.

As the surveillance zone (SZ) or Temporary Control Zone B (before disease is confirmed) is 10 km it will impact more businesses than the 3 km protection zone or (PZ) Temporary control zone A (before disease is confirmed).

The different requirement for Protection zones (PZ) and Surveillance zones (SZ) are slight. In the list below the conditions are for both zones unless otherwise stated.

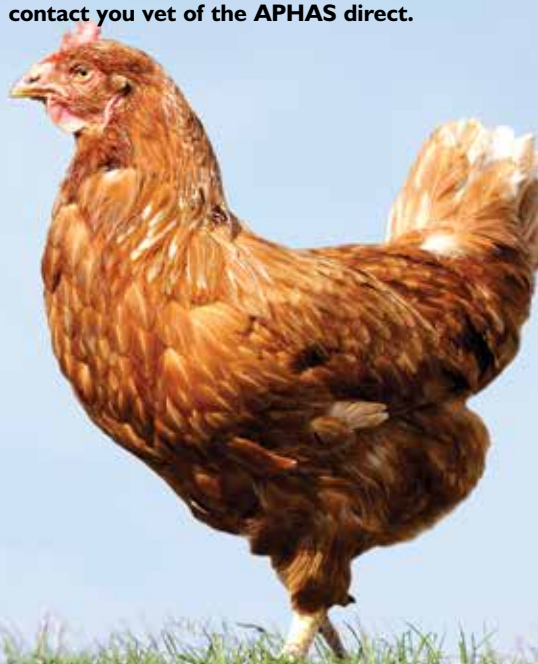
- Birds must be housed in the PZ only.
- Licenses are required from APHA for the movement of:-
- Poultry for processing must be vet inspected and deemed healthy 24 hours before being moved.
- Poultry meat must be licenced and labelled as from a protection zone, plus other hygiene conditions.
- Day old chicks - if from within the PZ must have veterinary approval to be moved in sealed vehicles. Chicks from eggs from outside the PZ must not come into contact with eggs or chicks from within the PZ.
- Point of lay pullets - must be vet inspected and transported in vehicles sealed by a vet or as instructed.
- Chicks from eggs from in the zone must be moved in vehicle sealed by a vet
- Chicks from eggs from outside the zone must not be mixed with eggs/chicks from within the zone.
- Table eggs to retail (PZ and SZ) are allowed to be moved direct to wholesale or retail premises.
- Eggs to a packer (PZ an SZ) must be licensed (no vet inspection required) and be in disposable packaging and the transport of such must comply with any biosecurity requirements.
- Eggs for processing – must be licensed
- Eggs for disposal - must be licensed
- Carcases for disposal – (PZ only) allowed according to veterinary instructions. Third parties need a licence
- Litter manure slurry – must be licensed

At the time of writing North Yorkshire has just got a housing order for all free range birds.

There are many cases of infection in turkeys. Technically if you are a turkey producer in the 3km Protection Zone you are not allowed to move carcases out of the zone to your customers (butchers or wholesale) without a license. The situation is developing by the hour and by the time you read this there may be a general order allowing you to do this. However, the APHA are over stretched with sampling and I don't think they will be able to issue licenses quickly enough.

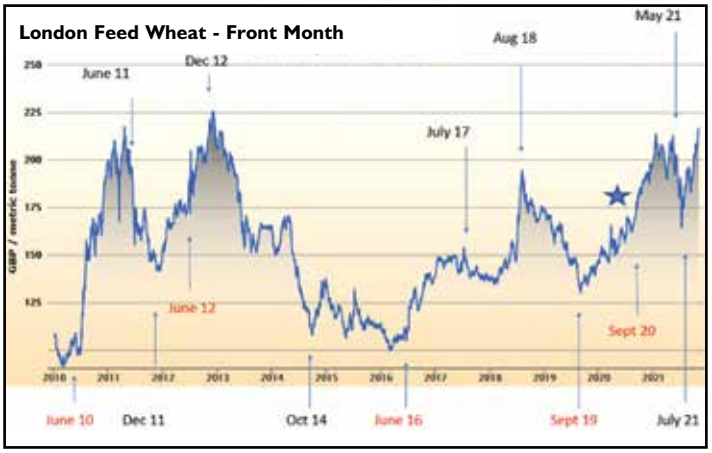
Turkey producers must obtain a Licence from APHA before you slaughter your poultry at your on-farm slaughter facility when it is in a Protection or Surveillance Zone. This Licence includes a requirement for pre-slaughter inspection and, in the Protection Zone, additional conditions for onward movement of the meat.

Please contact your local APHA office for more information or further clarification, contact you vet of the APHAS direct.



WHY DOES FEED PRICE KEEP GOING UP WHEN THE UK HAD A GOOD HARVEST?

Many producers believed that the good 2021 harvest would see a drop in the price of feed raw materials especially wheat and so did not contract forward during the harvest. Currently, this was the wrong decision. The graph below shows that harvest time does not necessarily mean a drop in the price of wheat.



The months in red show prices increased at harvest time. More recently there is a massive spike starting September 2019 and this has continued in autumn 2021.

Why was this?

In 2019 rainfall over the whole of England was 75% less than average and the end of July recorded the UK's whole time highest temperature. However, the second half of September and October 2019 will be remembered for frequent and torrential rain and fields became mud baths.

The 2019 autumn weather halted cereal plantings. The area sown fell by 24% to 1.4 million hectares, the smallest recorded area of wheat sown since the 1970s. The area of winter barley sown also decreased by 31% in 2019 but this was compensated for by spring barley plantings in 2020 which increased by 52% to give the largest area of barley sown since 1990.

But it's not only the UK that has been affected by bad weather.
In Germany for example there was extreme rainfall in July 2021 at the time of year when barley is normally being harvested. That barley goes via the canals to Holland. However, because the German harvest was delayed they had no barley to send and so Holland looked to the UK for supplies.

France has also had a bad milling wheat harvest due to wet weather. North America, and Canada are suffering droughts which are getting worse. The drought conditions in Canada have seriously affected wheat yields which are down 38% to 22 million tonnes, which is the smallest wheat crop since 2010 and this has affected their ability to export grain.

Russia has also seen extreme dryness and the harvest has been cut from 81 million tonnes to about 78 million tonnes. In addition to this, the Russian authorities have implemented an export duty of around $67/t as of end October 2021 to try and minimise wheat exports. This has given lots of support to the wheat market.

Back in the UK; early in the harvest our grain stores were empty and so no one was offering wheat or barley for sale. Although production is significantly higher than last year supplies are tight. Opening stock are 1.4MMT which is the lowest this century. The ethanol plants coming back online will only increase demand

There is very strong early demand for EU wheat and current levels of export are unsustainable. UK wheat is currently the cheapest feed wheat on the European market and there are reports of 40,000 tonnes being shipped to Portugal and Spain.

Prices continue to increase due to strong global wheat demand. Some countries need extra due to poor harvests; some of the regular sources don't have enough to fulfil all their orders and other countries have had unusual bumper harvests. All this causes huge displacement of supply and demand.

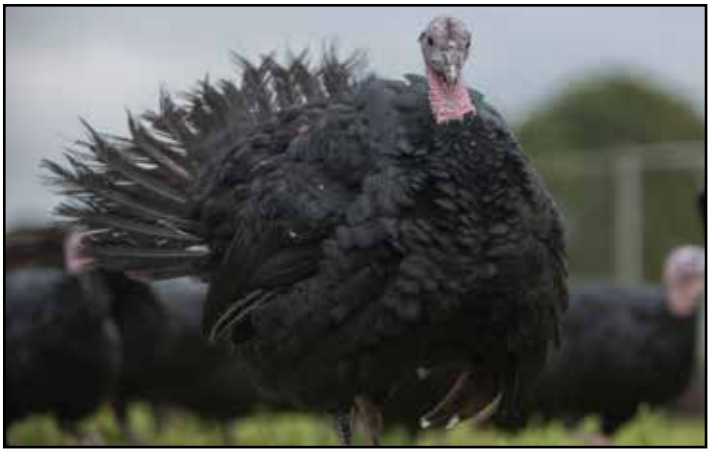
2021 saw a bumper harvest in Australia and this year is also forecast to be well above average. The area planted to winter crops is at a record high and average yields are 32% above the 10-year average. This will take pressure off Russian grain sales because the far eastern countries like Malaysia and Thailand can now turn to Australia for wheat supplies as Australia has an exportable surplus.

And the size of the 2022 harvest is uncertain in many parts of the world as Autumn sowing has been delayed in China due to heavy rain (only 26% planted vs average 53%) and in Russia due to lack of rain. This may reduce yield.

We also know that fertilizer prices have more than doubled since last year to over £700 for Nitrogen. There is also talk of Russia and China keeping home produced fertilizer for themselves and limiting fertilizer exports due to the cost of production (fuel) and low supplies. UK production of fertilizer could also be drastically reduced. This could result in reduced yields next year around the Globe.

In summary we must accept that the UK is involved in the World wheat market and regardless of how good our harvest is when world supplies are tight we will sell grain to the highest bidder even if that is abroad.

What does all this mean for prices? Chicago wheat December 21 contracts are the highest since Dec 12 and in the EU prices keep on rising. London futures for May 2022 hit £240.50/t on 22 November 21, the highest since December 2012.



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