

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** November 22, 2023

**Report Number:** HU2023-0007

## **Report Name:** Avian Influenza Returns to Hungary

**Country:** Hungary

**Post:** Budapest

**Report Category:** Agricultural Situation

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### **Report Highlights:**

Although Hungary regained its avian influenza free status on July 28, 2023, the disease has returned. In November 2023, animal health authorities confirmed primary outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in four counties. The epidemic is sweeping across Eastern Hungary. Control and quarantine measures are in place, but further cases are expected around the affected localities and in the neighboring counties as they are along stopover spots of migratory birds.

## General Information

Animal health authorities confirmed outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of HPAI in the counties of Hajdú-Bihar, Csongrád-Csanád, and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg:

- On November 4, 2023, HPAI symptoms (increased mortality, reduced feed and water intake) emerged at a breeding duck operation in Hajdúnánás (Hajdú-Bihar County), where 22,500 ducks were kept.
- On November 6, 2023, authorities detected primary HPAI infections at a fattening duck farm in Tiszadob (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) with a population of 51,257 birds.
- On November 13, 2023, increased mortality and neurological symptoms were also observed at a fattening goose farm of 5,922 waterfowl in Szentes (Csongrád-Csanád County) and a fattening turkey operation in Tizsakürt (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County), where 3,600 birds were kept.

The National Reference Laboratory confirmed the primary outbreaks and verified the presence of the H5N1 strain of HPAI at the mentioned operations. Control measures were immediately taken around the affected settlements with protection and surveillance zones established (Figure 1). Additionally, poultry farms have been ordered to keep their flocks indoors as of October 30, 2023 in the high-risk counties of Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Csongrád-Csanád, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Hajdú-Bihar, Komárom-Esztergom, and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg.

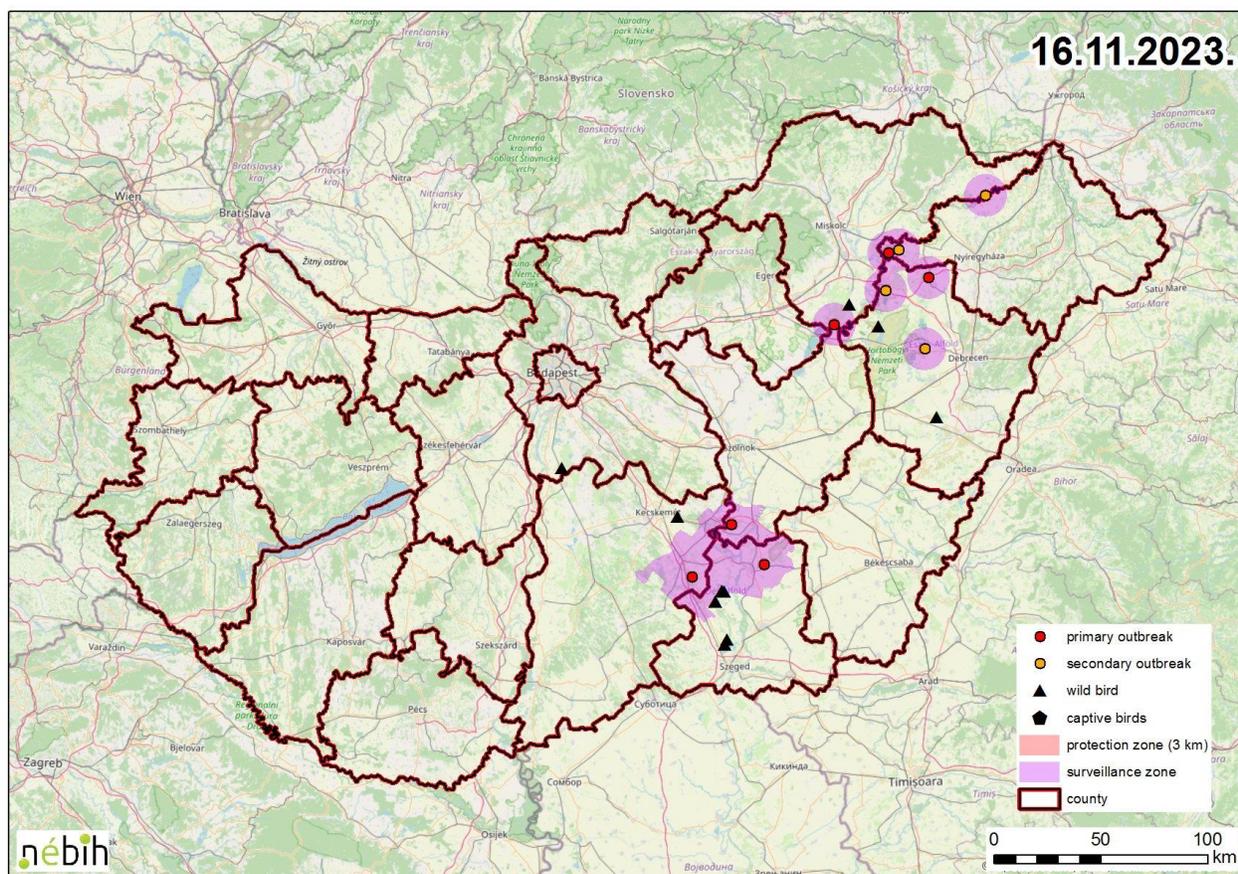


Figure 1: HPAI outbreaks in Hungary, November 16, 2023.

(Source: National Food Chain Safety Office)

The most likely source of infection is migrating animals because autopsies of wild birds, common cranes found dead in the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Csongrád-Csanád, Hajdú-Bihar, and Pest also proved the presence of the same H5N1 serotype. Therefore, further cases are expected around the affected localities and in the neighboring counties as they are close to stopover spots for migratory birds or along the major bird migration routes across the country.

Consecutive HPAI outbreaks have been a challenge for farmers, but Hungary's poultry sector has adjusted. The country's production is less affected by the epidemic due to the quarantine measures and the fact that closed production systems are widely used - particularly in the broiler industry. Stable domestic demand and capacity increasing investments helped the sector. At the same time, 15 percent of poultry producers left the business last year - even though the average farm gate price of chicken is 18.6 percent higher now than in the same period of 2022. This departure of producers from the market is primarily caused by the concentration of the country's livestock and poultry industries. As ongoing developments and concentration help efficiency, a moderate rebound is expected in Hungary's chicken production in 2023 despite the recurrent infections of avian influenza. HPAI outbreaks and import bans on Hungarian poultry products – currently introduced by 20 non-EU countries – minimally affect Hungarian chicken production because exports are mainly destined for EU countries. These member states apply regionalization and the WOA's terrestrial animal health code, which allows exports from non-infected areas.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.