

Onderbouwing noodzaak pluimveevrije zone rondom Wageningen Bioveterinary Research

Wageningen Bioveterinary Research (WBVR), voorheen o.a. bekend onder de naam Centraal Veterinair Instituut, werd begin jaren 70 van de vorige eeuw gevestigd in Flevoland, ten noorden van Lelystad. Komend vanuit Rotterdam en Amsterdam, was deze locatie bij uitstek geschikt om veilig te kunnen werken met het zwaar besmettelijke mond-en-klaauwzeer (MKZ) en andere besmettelijke dierziekten. De overheid kon in de nieuwe polder een zone vrij van landbouwhuisdieren realiseren en daarmee de potentiele kans op verspreiding van besmettelijke dierziekten sterk verminderen. Uiteraard werd bij de bouw van het CVI tevens voldaan aan de eisen die gesteld worden aan faciliteiten waarbij met besmettelijke dierziekten gewerkt wordt. Deze unit waarbinnen met besmettelijke virusziekten uit de hoogste categorie wordt gewerkt, voldoet aan de eisen van een unit waarin volgens de eisen van de Europese regelgeving met MKZ virus gewerkt mag en kan worden. Dit betekent o.a. het werken onder onderdruk, HEPA-luchtfiltering, behandeling van alle afvalstromen, en strikte toegangsregels voor personeel en bezoekers, inclusief quarantainemaatregelen na betreden van de unit. Bij het nemen van dergelijke maatregelen is er sprake van zogenaamde "redundancy": maatregelen worden dubbel uitgevoerd, of de ene maatregel is een back-up voor een andere maatregel in geval van storingen of andere incidenten.

Ten tijde van de vestiging in Flevoland was MKZ de belangrijkste dierziekte. Vanaf het eerst moment is, als onderdeel van het totale maatregelenpakket, uitgegaan van het vrijhouden van een gebied in een straal van 3 km rondom WBVR m.b.t. MKZ-gevoelige dieren. Deze 3 kilometer is in lijn met de in te stellen beschermingszone rondom een besmet bedrijf bij uitbraken van MKZ, waarbinnen de kans op uitbraken het grootst geacht wordt (richtlijn 2003/85/EG). Naast alle maatregelen die aan de bron genomen worden om ontsnappen van het virus te voorkomen, biedt dit bij een eventuele calamiteit de zekerheid dat een virus in de directe omgeving van WBVR geen geschikte gastheer vindt en de kans op een uitbraak dus verder gereduceerd wordt. Hoewel dergelijke calamiteiten uiterst zeldzaam zijn, hebben zij zich in het verleden in Europa wel voorgedaan. De grote gevolschade van zo'n calamiteit rechtvaardigen de zone rondom WBVR die vrij gehouden wordt van evenhoevigen en nu ook pluimvee.

In de vorige eeuw was aviaire influenza (AI) in Nederland geen probleem. Terwijl vanaf midden jaren 90 AI van het subtype H5N1 in Zuid-Oost Azië voor toenemende problemen zorgde, bleef Nederland lange tijd verschoont van AI-uitbraken. Dit verklaard waarom er lange tijd beperkte aandacht was voor AI en de aanwezigheid van pluimvee in de directe omgeving van WBVR.

Echter, in 2003 deed zich voor het eerst een uitbraak voor van hoog-pathogene AI. Bij deze uitbraak moesten tientallen miljoenen vogels vernietigd worden, maar bleek het influenza-virus tevens infectieus te zijn voor de mens. In tientallen gevallen leverde dat beperkte klinische verschijnselen als oogontsteking op, maar tijdens deze uitbraak is ook één dierenarts overleden als gevolg van een infectie met AI.

In de jaren daarna bleef AI voor Nederland en Europa in pluimvee in toenemende mate een terugkerend probleem. In veel gevallen betrof dit laag-pathogene AI (LPAI) infecties, maar door het feit dat deze LPAI stammen kunnen muteren tot hoog-pathogene varianten, werden beide varianten bestrijdingsplichtig. In 2014 en 2016 kreeg Nederland vervolgens opnieuw te maken met uitbraken van hoog-pathogene AI. Gelet op deze ontwikkelingen, en hoe de situatie zich in de rest van de wereld ontwikkelt, is er nauwelijks uitzicht op een afname van de AI-dreiging in de afzienbare toekomst. De dreiging van introducties met AI zijn momenteel zelfs groter en frequenter dan voor MKZ. Deze recente ontwikkelingen laten zien dat aanvullende veiligheidsmaatregelen rondom WBVR ten aanzien van pluimvee eveneens gerechtvaardigd zijn, dat wil zeggen een pluimveevrije zone van eveneens 3 kilometer, gelijk aan die voor MKZ-gevoelige dieren. Belangrijke redenen hiervoor zijn:

- 1) Ook voor AI kan als gevolg van een calamiteit bij WBVR sprake zijn van ontsnappen van virus, met alle gevolgen van dien. Door de aard van deze ziekten en de noodzaak tot maatregelen op regionaal dan wel nationaal niveau, kan de schade voor de hele pluimveesector, maar ook voor aanverwante industrie, oplopen tot een disproportionele omvang.
- 2) Bij uitbraken op bedrijven in de onmiddellijke omgeving van WBVR kunnen daarnaast maatregelen door de overheid op gebiedsniveau noodzakelijk zijn, waarmee het functioneren van WBVR in een crisissituatie ernstig verstoord kan worden (zie ook bijlage 1: brief Ministerie van EZ van 25 september 2015). Aangezien er bij AI tevens sprake zijn van een humaan risico, is het extra belangrijk dat WBVR ongehinderd en zonder beperkingen kan blijven functioneren, zonder dat uitbraken bij omliggende pluimveebedrijven direct dan wel indirect die werkzaamheden ernstig kunnen hinderen of vertragen.

De directe aanleiding voor het instellen van deze pluimveevrije zone was de intentie van een pluimveehouder om op minder dan 200 meter afstand van WBVR een pluimveebedrijf te vestigen. Hierop is tevens geïnventariseerd of er zich reeds pluimveebedrijven binnen de straal van de 3 kilometer bevonden. Er bleken zich 2 bedrijven in deze straal te bevinden, één met 3700 kippen en één met 25.600 vleeskuikens en 1500 eenden. Deze bedrijven bevinden zich resp. op circa 1900 en 1800 meter van WBVR. Voor deze bedrijven heeft een risicobeoordeling plaatsgevonden. Belangrijke risicofactoren die daarbij zijn meegewogen zijn:

- 1) Aantal bedrijven in een straal van 3 kilometer rondom WBVR.
- 2) Afstand van de bedrijven tot WBVR, (zie bijlage 2 "houden van pluimvee binnen een straal van 3 km").
- 3) Grootte van de bedrijven (zie bijlage 3 "besmettingsrisico's van AI nemen toe met de grootte van het pluimveebedrijf").
- 4) Type bedrijven (diersoort, al of niet met uitloop) (zie bijlage 4 "Risk for low pathogenicity avian influenza virus on poultry farms, the Netherlands, 2007-2013").

De aanwezigheid van deze twee bedrijven binnen de 3 kilometer zone levert weliswaar een extra risico op, maar gelet op de genoemde risicofactoren is dit ingeschatt als zeer gering, waarbij het eventuele wegbestemmen van deze bedrijven disproportioneel lijkt te zijn. De relatief geringe omvang, afstand tot WBVR en het feit dat het in de hele zone slechts 2 bedrijven betreft, zijn daarbij de belangrijkste overwegingen geweest. Hieruit vloeit wel voort dat het niet wenselijk is om de risico's verder te laten toenemen door het toestaan van nieuwe bedrijven in de 3 kilometer zone, het laten toenemen van de omvang (in aantal dieren) van bestaande bedrijven, of het toestaan dat bij eventuele renovatie de bestaande bedrijven dichter bij WBVR komen te liggen.

Nota bene: In de discussies is in het verleden gefocust op MKZ, en nu AI. Bij WBVR wordt met meer dierziektes gewerkt waarvoor de hierboven geschatte maatregelen relevant zijn. Voor de relevante landbouwhuisdieren, varkens, schapen, geiten, is hier vanuit de MKZ-maatregelen al in voorzien. Met de op AI gebaseerde maatregelen wordt hierin voorzien voor de houderijen van diverse relevante vogelsoorten (kippen, eenden, kalkoenen, enz.).

Concluderend is er door de gewijzigde situatie in deze eeuw ten aanzien van AI in Nederland, maar ook de rest van de wereld, een noodzaak ontstaan om voor AI vergelijkbare aanvullende maatregelen (beschermingszone rondom WBVR) te nemen als voor MKZ reeds lange tijd bestaan. Een uitzondering kan worden gemaakt voor de twee reeds bestaande bedrijven, om redenen zoals hierboven geschat, zolang er geen sprake is van groei of verplaatsing in de richting van WBVR.

25 augustus 2017, Wageningen Boveterinary Research

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Bijlage(n)

Datum 25 september 2015
Betreft Rol Centraal Veterinair Instituut

LS,

Het Centraal Veterinair Instituut voert wettelijke onderzoekstaken uit voor het Ministerie van Economische Zaken bij aangewezen dierziekten, zoals vogelgriep (AI) en mond-en-klaauwzeer MKZ). Een aantal dierziekten is ook Europeesrechtelijk bestrijdingsplichtig. Deze onderzoekstaken betreffen enerzijds diagnostiek en advies bij verdenkingen of besmettingen van deze ziekten en anderzijds wetenschappelijk onderzoek om de kennis over deze ziekten te vergroten. Deze taken zijn cruciaal voor het in standhouden van de goede diergezondheidstatus van de Nederlandse veehouderijsector enerzijds en voor de afname van export garanties aan Europese lidstaten en derde landen anderzijds. Het is van groot belang dat de continuïteit van deze taken en werkzaamheden is gewaarborgd.

Bij uitbraken van bestrijdingsplichtige dierziekten stelt het Ministerie van EZ diverse maatregelen rondom een besmet bedrijf in om de ziekte te bestrijden. Deze maatregelen kunnen de normale werkzaamheden van het CVI hinderen of bemoeilijken, wat weer consequenties heeft voor de wettelijke taak voor het Ministerie om de ziekte te bestrijden.


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20/11/2016

Houden van pluimvee binnen een straal van 3 km rondom Centraal Veterinair Instituut ongewenst

Binnen het Centraal Veterinair Instituut (CVI), gevestigd aan de Houtribweg 39 te Lelystad, wordt gewerkt met vogelgriepvirussen (ook aviaire influenzavirussen genoemd). In verband hiermee is het belangrijk dat er geen pluimveehouderijen in de omgeving van het CVI worden gevestigd. Als omgeving geldt een gebied van met een straal van 3 km rondom de locatie van het CVI; dit is in lijn met het gebied met een straal van 3 km waarbinnen geen evenhoevigen mogen worden gehouden i.v.m. de risico's verbonden aan het werken met mond-en-klaauzeervirus (MKZ) bij het CVI.

De vestiging van pluimveehouderijen binnen 3 km rondom CVI is ongewenst om de volgende redenen:

1. Hoog-pathogene vogelgriep gaat gepaard met hoge sterfte onder besmet pluimvee met als gevolg enorme economische schade niet alleen voor de getroffen pluimveehouders maar ook voor de gehele pluimveehouderij in Nederland, omdat de export wegvalt. Weliswaar gebeurt het onderzoek aan vogelgriepvirus bij CVI in een "high-containment unit" onder zeer strenge bio-veiligheidsmaatregelen, om te voorkomen dat pluimveebedrijven vanuit het CVI zouden worden besmet met een vogelgriepvirus. Maar ondanks deze zeer strenge maatregelen is het niet geheel uit te sluiten dat vogelgriepvirus zou ontsnappen uit het CVI; bijvoorbeeld bij een ontploffing van apparatuur of een andere calamiteit. In zo'n situatie hebben omliggende bedrijven een veel minder grote kans om besmet te raken naarmate ze verder van CVI af liggen, waarbij de kans op meer dan 3 km afstand duidelijk lager is. Dat het besmettingsrisico bij pluimveebedrijven afneemt met de afstand tot een besmettingsbron is aangetoond in een wetenschappelijke analyse van de epidemie van hoog-pathogene vogelgriep in 2003 in Nederland [1]. Het besmettingsrisico op afstand van een besmettingsbron is voor hoog-pathogene vogelgriep in pluimveebedrijven vergelijkbaar met dat voor MKZ in bedrijven met evenhoevigen [2].
2. Een pluimveebedrijf in de omgeving van CVI kan besmet raken met hoog-pathogene vogelgriepvirus vanuit wilde watervogels die vogelgriepvirus bij zich (kunnen) dragen of vanuit een eerder besmet ander pluimveebedrijf. Dit zal tot grote imagoschade voor het CVI kunnen leiden, ingeval het CVI vanwege de nabijheid als mogelijke bron zou worden aangemerkt in de media.

Bij vestiging van een pluimveebedrijf binnen een straal van 1 km van het CVI is er nog een derde reden waarom dit ongewenst is:

3. In geval van constatering van een besmetting met (laag-pathogene) vogelgriepvirus op het bedrijf zal binnen een straal van 1 km een vervoersverbod van pluimvee en eieren worden afgekondigd. Dit zal de bedrijfsvoering en taakuitvoering van het CVI ernstig kunnen belemmeren. NB: Infecties van pluimveebedrijven met de laag-pathogene variant van vogelgriepvirus treden in Nederland jaarlijks verschillende keren op.

[1]. G.J. Boender, T.J. Hagenaars, A. Bouma, G. Nodelijk, A.R.W. Elbers, M.C.M. de Jong, M. van Boven. (2007). Risk maps for the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry. PLoS Comput. Biol. 3, e71.

[2]. G.J. Boender, H.J.W. van Roermund, M.C.M. de Jong, T.J. Hagenaars. (2010). Transmission risks and control of foot-and-mouth disease in The Netherlands: Spatial patterns. Epidemics 2, 36-47.

18 - 8 - 2016.

Besmettingsrisico's voor AI nemen toe met de grootte van het pluimveebedrijf

Hoe groter een pluimveebedrijf, d.w.z. hoe hoger het aantal dieren op een bedrijf, des te groter is het risico op besmetting met aviaire influenza vanuit een eerder besmet ander pluimveebedrijf (en daarmee naar verwachting ook bij ontsnapping van AI virus uit de HCU van CVI). Deze tendens blijkt uit analyses van zowel de H7N7 epidemie in Nederland in 2003 [1] als van de H7N1 epidemie in Italië in 1999-2000 [2], en is ook begrijpelijk: Bij blootstelling van het bedrijf aan virusdeeltjes heeft elk dier een zekere (kleine) kans om besmet te raken, en dus is het logisch te beredeneren dat naarmate er meer dieren aanwezig zijn, de kans groter wordt dat er één of meerdere dieren besmet raken en er vervolgens een uitbraak op het bedrijf ontstaat.

Ook voor het risico op verdere verspreiding vanuit het bedrijf is het, hoewel dit nog niet aan de hand van epidemieën is aangetoond, wel aannemelijk dat het groter wordt naarmate het aantal dieren op het bedrijf hoger is. Immers bij een uitbraak op een bedrijf zal het aantal virus uitscheidende dieren, gemiddeld over de duur van die uitbraak, in het algemeen hoger zijn naarmate er meer dieren op het bedrijf staan. Het bedrijf wordt daarmee besmettelijker naar andere bedrijven. Deze verwachting wordt ondersteund door een geavanceerde statistische analyse van de gegevens van de grote epidemie van klassieke varkenspest (KVP) onder Nederlandse varkensbedrijven in 1997/1998 [3]. Uit deze analyse is gebleken dat tijdens die epidemie de risico's toenamen met de grootte van het bedrijf; niet alleen het risico op besmetting met KVP van een gegeven nog onbesmet bedrijf maar ook het risico op verdere verspreiding vanuit een gegeven besmet bedrijf nam toe met de bedrijfs grootte.

[1] M.E. Thomas, A. Bouma, H.M. Ekker, A.J.M. Fonken, J.A. Stegeman, M. Nielen. Risk factors for the introduction of high pathogenicity Avian Influenza virus into poultry farms during the epidemic in the Netherlands in 2003. Preventive Veterinary Medicine 69 (2005) 1–11.

[2] L. Busani, M. G. Valsecchi, E. Rossi, M. Toson, N. Ferre, M. Dalla Pozza, S. Marangon. Risk factors for highly pathogenic H7N1 avian influenza virus infection in poultry during the 1999–2000 epidemic in Italy. The Veterinary Journal 181 (2009) 171–177.

[3]. G.J. Boender, R. van den Hengel, H.J.W. van Roermund, T.J. Hagenaars. (2014). The Influence of Between-Farm Distance and Farm Size on the Spread of Classical Swine Fever during the 1997–1998 Epidemic in The Netherlands. PLoS ONE 9(4): e95278.

Risk for Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Virus on Poultry Farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013

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Using annual serologic surveillance data from all poultry farms in the Netherlands during 2007–2013, we quantified the risk for the introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus (LPAIV) in different types of poultry production farms and putative spatial-environmental risk factors: distance from poultry farms to clay soil, waterways, and wild waterfowl areas. Outdoor-layer, turkey (meat and breeder), and duck (meat and breeder) farms had a significantly higher risk for LPAIV introduction than did indoor-layer farms. Except for outdoor-layer, all poultry types (i.e., broilers, chicken breeders, ducks, and turkeys) are kept indoors. For all production types, LPAIV risk decreased significantly with increasing distance to medium-sized waterways and with increasing distance to areas with defined wild waterfowl, but only for outdoor-layer and turkey farms. Future research should focus not only on production types but also on distance to waterways and wild bird areas. In addition, settlement of new poultry farms in high-risk areas should be discouraged.

Avian influenza is a disease of birds caused by influenza A viruses. Wild birds, particularly migratory water birds, form a natural reservoir of avian influenza viruses. Influenza viruses carry 2 glycoproteins on their surface, hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA), and on the basis of these glycoproteins are divided into subtypes. Eighteen distinct subtypes of HA (H1–H18) and 11 NA subtypes (N1–N11) have been described. Influenza A(H17N10) and A(H18N11), however, were recently detected in bats but not in birds. Virtually all remaining combinations of HA 1–16 and NA 1–9 subtypes have been isolated from wild birds (1). Wild birds pose a special risk for introducing avian influenza viruses of all subtypes to poultry kept in free-range or outdoor facilities (2).

Avian influenza virus infections in wild birds usually are asymptomatic. Infection of poultry ranges from no

disease to severe disease and up to 100% mortality (3). A virus that causes no or mild disease in chickens is considered a low pathogenicity avian influenza virus (LPAIV); a virus that causes high rates of death in chickens is considered a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAIV) (4). HPAIV outbreaks in poultry cause huge direct and indirect economic losses (5). Furthermore, on several occasions during the last decade, bird-to-human transmissions of H5, H6, H7, H9, and H10 virus subtypes have occurred, emphasizing the threat to public health worldwide (6). Every HPAIV described has belonged to H5 and H7 subtypes and, until the spread of the Asian HPAIV subtype H5N1 to other parts of the world by wild birds since 2005 (7), mainly emerged after LPAIV of these subtypes were introduced in poultry, particularly in chickens and turkeys (8). Therefore, LPAIV of the H5 and H7 subtypes is notifiable to the World Organisation for Animal Health; consequently, member states of the European Union have implemented surveillance programs (9).

In the Netherlands, passive and active surveillance programs are in place. In the active serologic surveillance program, all poultry farms are tested 1–4 times a year. Frequency of sampling differs among poultry types (indoor- and outdoor-layer chickens, chicken breeders, broilers, ducks, and turkeys) and housing systems based on the supposed differences in the risk for LPAIV introduction. Except for outdoor-layers, all poultry types are kept indoors.

In a previous study (10), a significantly higher risk for LPAIV introduction was observed on poultry farms in Europe housing Anseriformes (duck, geese, and game birds) than on farms housing Galliformes (chicken breeders, broilers, layer chickens, and turkeys), and no significant differences were observed among Galliformes. In addition, Gonzales et al. (11) reported a significantly higher risk for LPAIV introduction on outdoor-layer, turkey, duck-breeder, and meat-duck farms than on indoor-layer farms in the Netherlands using surveillance data for 2007–2010. These studies (10,11) did not find differences in the risk for introduction among farms keeping chickens indoors, particularly between

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2309.170276>

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layers and broilers, possibly because of the limited data on positive introductions (or zero introductions) into broiler farms (11), which compromised the power of the comparisons. Our objective was to update the risk analysis of introduction of LPAIV infection using an extended surveillance period (2007–2013) and add spatial-environmental factors to the analysis that might explain part of the variation in LPAIV introductions on poultry farms in the Netherlands.

Materials and Methods

Data

We analyzed all data from the Netherlands' surveillance program collected during January 2007–December 2013. In the Netherlands, 3 types of surveillance programs are used to detect avian influenza virus infections on commercial poultry farms: passive surveillance, early warning, and serologic monitoring.

Passive surveillance for the early detection of notifiable avian influenza is based on clinical signs (12), an amnesia of exponentially increasing death in the affected flock, or both. This surveillance is effective for acute infection causing severe disease (mainly HPAIV infection) but less so for LPAIV infection, which often causes mild or no disease. Samples (blood, tissue, and/or tracheal and cloacal swabs) of diseased/dead birds are tested by ELISA, PCR, and virus isolation.

Early warning includes signals such as aberrations in production parameters (decreased egg production, increased death rates, decreased feed and/or water intake). It excludes avian influenza as the cause of clinical problems in poultry flocks in situations in which birds show clinical signs that can be caused by other avian pathogens. Tracheal and cloacal swabs are tested for avian influenza by PCR (exclusion diagnostics).

The serologic monitoring program is active surveillance to detect all avian influenza virus incursions, even those that remain subclinical. This program is much more intense than required by the European Union: all poultry farms, except outdoor-layer farms and turkey farms, are tested at least once a year. Thirty samples per farm are screened by ELISA, and positive samples are confirmed by hemagglutination-inhibition test. Outdoor-layer farms are tested 4 times per year, and turkey farms are tested each production cycle. Meat-turkey farms have an average production cycle of ≈4 months; for broilers and meat ducks, this cycle is 5–6 weeks. All sampling is done just before slaughter, except the 3 extra samplings in outdoor-layer farms.

Farms were identified by their unique farm number and categorized on the basis of poultry production type (PT): duck breeders, meat ducks (meat production), turkey breeders, meat turkey, broilers, broiler breeders, indoor-layers, outdoor-layers, and layer breeders.

We selected putative spatial-environmental risk factors for LPAIV introduction related to farm location for incorporation in the risk model. These risk factors were distance to clay soil, distance to waterways, and distance to defined wild waterfowl areas.

We analyzed the farms' distance to clay soil (Geodesk database [GDB3]; Wageningen University, Wageningen, the Netherlands). Clay soil is a sediment of large rivers and is, in epidemiologic terms, a proxy for the presence of large water quantities, which is a proxy for an attractive environment for wild waterfowl. Wild waterfowl is presumed to be the most important reservoir for LPAIV. Presence of clay soil close to poultry farms was a risk factor for LPAIV introduction on outdoor-layer farms (13).

We also assessed distance from farms to waterways. Three sizes of waterways (width in meters) were included in the model: small (0.5–3 m wide), medium (3–6 m wide), and large (≥ 6 m wide). Presence of waterways is a proxy for an attractive environment for wild waterfowl; spatial data of waterways was available from the Dutch Land Registry (<http://www.kadaster.nl/web/artikel/producent/TOP10NL.htm>).

Distance to defined wild waterfowl areas is a direct proxy for a possible avian influenza virus reservoir. Wild waterfowl areas were defined as follows: areas with on average ≥ 5 wild water birds counted per hectare (based on systematic regular bird census schemes by Sovon [Nijmegen, the Netherlands], which coordinates the monitoring of wild bird populations in the Netherlands). Birds of the families *Anatidae*, *Laridae*, and *Rallidae* were included; these birds are known avian influenza virus carriers (14,15) (online Technical Appendix, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/23/9/17-0276-Techapp1.pdf>).

Positive Farms

Positive farms were defined as follows: farms with ≥ 1 seropositive animal to any avian influenza strain in both the screening ELISA (IDEXX FlockCheck AI MultiScreen, IDEXX Europe B.V., Hoofddorp, the Netherlands) and the confirmatory hemagglutination-inhibition test; or farms with ≥ 3 positive results (of 30 serum samples) in the screening ELISA. Furthermore, we included in the analysis only primary cases (excluding secondary spread detected by epidemiologic tracing).

Period at Risk

Positive Farms

For every year, we estimated the period at risk (in months) as the sum of the period from January 1 and the last negative sampling plus half of the period between the last negative sampling and the positive sampling. In case of no negative sampling in the year the farm became positive, the last negative sampling of the year before was included. In that

instance, the time at risk was estimated as half of the period from the last negative sampling to the first positive sampling. Broilers, meat turkeys, and meat ducks were sampled 1 week before the end of their production. Therefore, the period at risk for these PTs was set at a fixed period.

Negative Farms

For every year, we estimated the period at risk (in months) as the period from January 1 through last negative sampling. This sampling was done for all PTs except broiler, meat-turkey, and meat-duck farms. For the latter, the period at risk was the same as for the corresponding positive farms.

Statistical Analysis

We analyzed data using the statistical software R version 3.1.3 (<https://www.r-project.org/>). The relative risk (RR) of introduction of LPAIV per type of poultry farm (PT), during the study period (2007–2013) was quantified using multivariate statistical models (known as generalized linear models or generalized linear mixed models [GLMMs]) (online Technical Appendix). We used indoor-layer chicken farms as the reference category. In terms of disease causation, if the RR is <1, the factor is considered a sparing factor, whereas if the RR is >1, the factor is considered a putative causal factor (16). In addition, we studied the effect of the spatial-environmental variables (distance to clay soil, waterways, and wild waterfowl areas) on the risk for LPAIV introduction. Statistical investigation started with a univariate analysis; distance of clay soil to the location of poultry farms was significantly associated with risk for LPAIV introduction only for layer (indoor and outdoor) farms. The different categories of waterways were significantly associated with risk for LPAIV introduction, but medium-sized waterways showed by far the strongest association. Thus, in the multivariate analysis, distance to clay soil and small- and large-sized waterways fell out of the model in the selection process; distance to medium-sized waterways and distance to wild waterfowl areas were strongly associated with risk for LPAIV introduction

and stayed in the model when tested together in the multivariate analysis.

Results

During 2007–2013, we surveyed 19,274 farms and detected 295 LPAIV introductions (Table 1). The Netherlands has a small population of turkey and duck breeder farms, and these small populations, in particular turkey breeders (only 1 farm in 2013 and a maximum of 5 in 2007), made it difficult to evaluate potential interactions (e.g., between PT and distance variables) when modeling the risk for introduction. Therefore, we first made an overall quantification of the RR for each PT and included the year of surveillance as a random effect in a GLMM. Broiler, broiler-breeder, and layer-breeder farms were at significantly lower risk for LPAIV introduction ($p<0.05$) than were indoor-layer farms (e.g., broiler farms had on average a 5 times [1/0.2] lower risk for LPAIV introduction than did indoor-layer farms) (Table 2). By contrast, the risk was significantly higher for outdoor-layer, duck, duck-breeder, meat-turkey, and turkey-breeder farms ($p<0.05$) (e.g., outdoor-layer farms had on average a 6.3 times higher risk for LPAIV introductions than indoor-layer farms). The effect of distance from medium-sized waterways to farm location was comparable for the different PTs, and we included this variable in the GLMM (Table 2). The risk for LPAIV introduction decreased with increasing distance from poultry farms to medium-sized waterways; RR was highest within the closest 500 m (Figure 1). To evaluate potential statistical interactions, we combined meat-turkey and turkey-breeder farms (which had similar RR estimates in our first analysis [Table 2]), and we evaluated the effect of the location variables and potential interactions. A generalized linear model fit better than a GLMM. We identified significant interactions between 1) year of surveillance and indoor- and outdoor-layer farms and 2) distance to wild waterfowl areas and outdoor-layer farms or meat turkey farms. The analysis showed a yearly decrease in the RR for indoor-layer farms (Table 3), in contrast to an increased risk for

Table 1. LPAIV surveillance data collated from poultry farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013*

Type of farm	No. farms positive	Total no. farms	Median time at risk, mo	Median distance to wild water bird areas, m	Median distance to medium-sized waterway, m†	Probability of introduction‡	RR§
Indoor-layer	60	5,600	7.3	4,227	769	0.001	1
Outdoor-layer	143	2,549	6.3	3,996	670	0.009	6.0
Layer-breeder	14	2,174	9.5	4,157	738	0.001	0.5
Broiler	2	5,409	1.2	3,292	576	0.000	0.2
Broiler-breeder	14	2,718	8.5	4,002	824	0.001	0.4
Meat-turkey	30	469	3.7	3,208	1,042	0.017	11.7
Turkey-breeder	2	18	5.7	2,035	659	0.019	13.1
Meat-duck	16	267	1.2	3,477	1,180	0.050	33.9
Duck-breeder	14	70	5.8	4,107	767	0.034	23.4

*LPAIV, low pathogenicity avian influenza virus; RR, relative risk.

†Distance to clay soil and distance to small- and large-sized waterways also included in the multivariate analysis (data not shown). They did not have a significant effect on the risk for LPAIV introduction. Waterway sizes were defined as follows: small, 0.5–3 m wide; medium, 3–6 m wide; large, >6 m wide.

‡Unadjusted probabilities of LPAIV introduction per farm months at risk.

§These are the unadjusted RR estimates obtained by dividing the unadjusted probabilities of LPAIV introduction of each type of poultry farm by that of indoor-layer farms.

Table 2. Relative risks for introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus infection in different types of poultry farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013

Type of poultry farm	Relative risk (95% CI)	p value
Indoor-layer	1.0 (reference)	
Outdoor-layer	6.3 (4.7–8.6)	<0.00001
Layer-breeder	0.5 (0.3–0.8)	0.008
Broiler	0.2 (0.1–0.8)	0.02
Broiler-breeder	0.4 (0.2–0.8)	0.004
Meat-turkey	12.0 (7.8–18.8)	<0.00001
Turkey-breeder	11.3 (2.8–46.2)	0.0008
Meat-duck	39.5 (22.6–69.1)	<0.00001
Duck-breeder	25.5 (14.2–45.9)	<0.00001
Natural logarithm*	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.00005

*Of distance to medium-sized waterways in meters, i.e., 3–6 m wide.

outdoor-layer farms for 2012 and 2013 (Figure 2). The risk for LPAIV introduction in outdoor-layer and meat turkey farms decreased with increasing distance to areas with wild waterfowl (Figures 2, 3). No significant risk was found for distance to clay soil.

Discussion

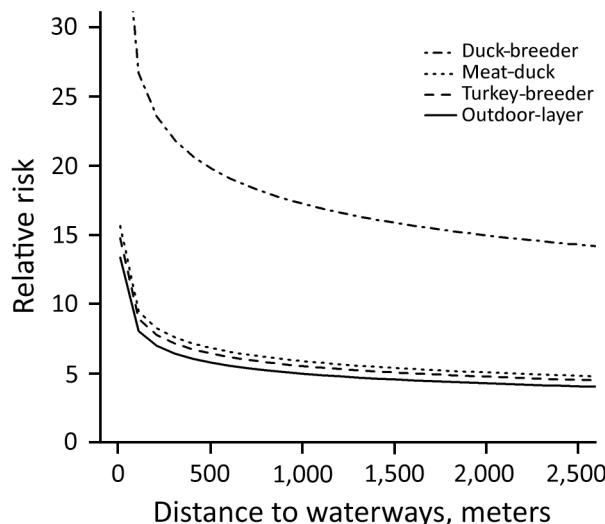
Our study shows that outdoor-layer, duck (breeder and meat), and turkey (breeder and meat) farms have a significantly higher RR for LPAIV introduction than do indoor-layer farms. The higher risk in outdoor-layer farms probably reflects their higher exposure to LPAIV from a contaminated environment. The presence of avian influenza in wild water birds and the frequency of direct or indirect contact between reservoir birds and poultry are risk components that enable transmission from wild birds to poultry. However, in addition to the higher introduction rate on outdoor-layer farms (this study) and the genetic relationship of wild

bird strains and avian influenza outbreak viruses (17), no scientific data have been available that could support this assumption, although physical environmental factors, such as surface water availability and proximity to lakes and wetlands, have been suggested as drivers of HPAIV H5N1 outbreaks in poultry and wild birds (18,19).

We described a significant spatial-environmental relationship: the closer to waterways—a proxy for an attractive environment for wild waterfowl—and wild waterfowl areas a farm is located, in particular outdoor-layer farms, the higher the risk for LPAIV introduction. Although waterfowl and shorebirds are known to form the major natural reservoir and source of all known influenza A viruses (14,20,21), there is little direct evidence for transmission of avian influenza virus from (wild) birds to poultry. Two lines of evidence suggest that wild birds can be the source of avian influenza infection in poultry: 1) temporal associations between avian influenza virus isolated from wild birds and from outbreaks in poultry flocks and 2) genetic similarity between avian influenza virus strains isolated from wild birds and from poultry. Phylogenetic studies support the presumed transmission route from wild birds to poultry. For example, an LPAIV H7N7 caused the HPAI H7N7 epidemic in the Netherlands that started at a free-range farm (22). This virus is believed to be a reassortant of an H7N3 virus and an H10N7 virus isolated from mallards in 2000 during survey studies of migratory wild birds in the Netherlands (23). Furthermore, recent genetic analyses of HPAIV H5N8 strains from the Netherlands, and of other strains from countries in Europe, South Korea, and Japan, suggested that the strains from Europe probably arrived through migratory wild birds from Asia, most likely through overlapping flyways and common breeding sites in Siberia (24,25).

In the Netherlands, turkeys are raised indoors, and despite the small number of turkey farms, we observed a higher RR for introduction of LPAIV infection to breeder and meat-turkey farms. This higher risk might be associated partly with the apparent higher susceptibility of turkeys than chickens to LPAIV infection (26).

As reported by Gonzales et al. (10), we found that duck-breeder farms have the highest RR for LPAIV introduction. This risk could be related to their higher susceptibility to infection with LPAIV of wild water bird origin (ducks, geese, and swans) than chickens (27) and

**Figure 1.** Risk for introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus into duck-breeder, meat-duck, meat-turkey, and outdoor-layer farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013. For the estimation of the relative risk as a function of distance to medium-sized waterways (3–6 m wide), distance to wild waterfowl areas was kept constant.**Table 3.** Yearly relative risk for introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus in indoor-layer farms, the Netherlands

Year	Relative risk (95% CI)
2007	1 (reference)
2008	0.65 (0.48–1.04)
2009	0.63 (0.28–0.84)
2010	0.41 (0.28–0.68)
2011	0.56 (0.44–0.70)
2012	0.5 (0.30–0.83)
2013	0.15 (0.04–0.27)

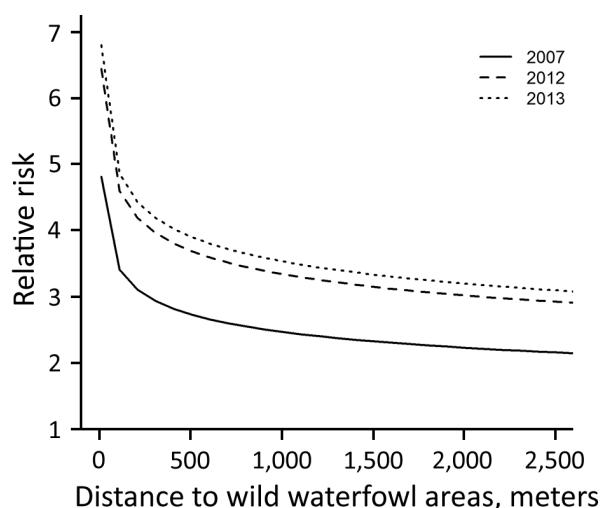


Figure 2. Risk for introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus into outdoor-layer farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013. Relative risk is shown for 2007 (reference for between-year comparison), 2012 ($p = 0.08$), and 2013 ($p = 0.005$). For the estimation of the relative risk as a function of distance to wild waterfowl areas, distance to medium-sized waterways (3–6 m wide) was kept constant.

their long production cycle (time of exposure). We also observed a significantly higher risk for LPAIV introduction into meat-duck farms than into indoor-layer farms. This finding is somewhat surprising because meat ducks are kept indoors and have a short production cycle (6.5 weeks), in contrast with broilers, which also are kept indoors, have a short production cycle (6 weeks), and had a very low risk for LPAIV introduction. The higher susceptibility of ducks than chickens to LPAIV (27) could be a reason to explain this contrast. In addition, poor biosecurity compliance might play a role. For instance, floor bedding for ducks is stored outside (often not protected by a cover) and transported inside the duck house several times during the growing period. Bedding material for broilers is mostly stored inside the poultry house and is placed only once during the production cycle or not replaced. Poor biosecurity compliance has been reported repeatedly in poultry production (28–30). Meat ducks and broilers are tested before slaughter, and considering that the time to build up a serologic prevalence after an LPAIV infection that can be detected by random sampling could take ≈2–3 weeks (31), LPAIV introductions that occur shortly before slaughter could be missed. Therefore, the RRs could be underestimated for both meat ducks and broilers. Nevertheless, by looking at the large number of broiler flocks tested along these years, the fact that only 2 LPAIV introductions were detected, and the fact that surveillance was able to detect a relatively high number of LPAIV introductions in meat ducks (also short production cycle),

we conclude that the risk for LPAIV introduction in broilers is low under housing conditions in the Netherlands.

In addition, the RR for layer-breeder farms was 5 times lower for LPAIV introduction than it was for indoor-layer farms (2011–2013). These findings might be related to the high biosecurity levels on these PTs.

Our finding that the RR for LPAIV introduction on outdoor-layer farms increased over time (a significantly higher RR in 2013 than in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2011) can be explained by an increase of the number of introductions on outdoor-layer farms, especially in 2012 and 2013. An increase in the number of outdoor-layer farms and a decrease in the number of indoor-layer farms (for which RR decreased over time), particularly in 2012 and 2013, might partly explain these changes in risk. Further research is needed to gain insight into the factors that might affect introduction rates and differences over time. A plausible explanation might be increased direct or indirect contact between outdoor ranging poultry and infectious wild bird populations, but this explanation remains speculative because field data on the type and frequency of contact between wild birds and poultry in outdoor-layer farms is still missing. Climate and land use changes during the past decades have affected winter and breeding bird community composition (32); effects on herbivorous birds (such as many waterfowl species) through phenology-induced changes of plant forage quality and availability are most pronounced (33,34).

As recent experience shows, wild birds can introduce HPAIV directly into poultry (24,25), and HPAIV can

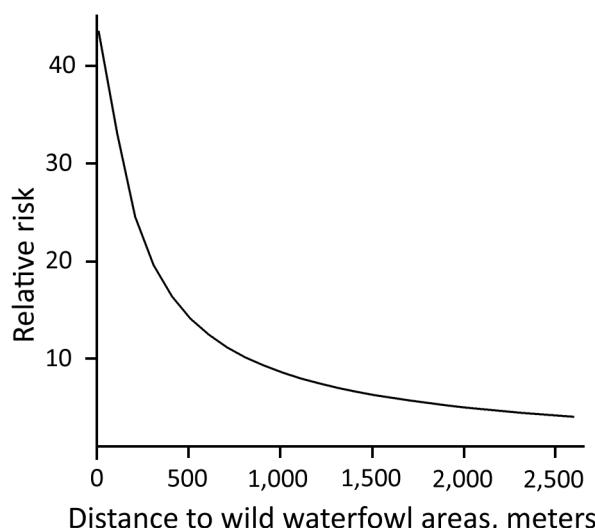


Figure 3. Relative risk for introduction of low pathogenicity avian influenza virus into meat-turkey farms, the Netherlands, 2007–2013. No difference in risk was observed between surveillance years. For the estimation of the relative risk as a function of distance to wild waterfowl areas, distance to medium-sized waterways (3–6 m wide) was kept constant.

emerge after an LPAIV H5/H7 introduction in poultry after varying lengths of time (8). If a notifiable LPAIV subtype infects a farm and later spreads to other farms before detection, the risk increases for mutation to HPAIV (35). Therefore, the sooner an introduction is detected, the sooner restrictive measures can be applied to contain the infection, ideally even to the index farm. Early detection and removal of infected poultry will help lower viral replication rounds.

Surveillance programs are important tools to prevent new HPAIV outbreaks. In the Netherlands the avian influenza surveillance program is much more intense than required by the European Union (9). Frequent sampling of high-risk poultry farms may help reduce the risk for transmission between farms (31,36). Based on expected risk factors for introduction, outdoor-layer farms (more contact with wild birds) and meat-turkey farms (higher susceptibility) are tested more frequently than other poultry farms. The results of our study indicate that duck farms also should be tested more frequently; passive surveillance will not easily detect LPAIV introductions in ducks because LPAIV will not cause observable clinical signs in them. Furthermore, it is clear that we should target surveillance not only toward PT, but also on location (e.g., within 500 m of waterways, wild bird areas, or both). In addition, there could be a discouraging strategy for settlement of new poultry farms in high-risk areas.

This study was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs (Avian Influenza and Newcastle disease project WOT-01-003-012) and supported by the Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis project WOT-01-001-004.

Dr. Bouwstra was a project leader of avian influenza and Newcastle disease at Wageningen Bioveterinary Research, Lelystad, the Netherlands, at the time of the study and currently is head of the poultry health department, GD Animal Health, Deventer. Her research interests are notifiable animal diseases and One Health.

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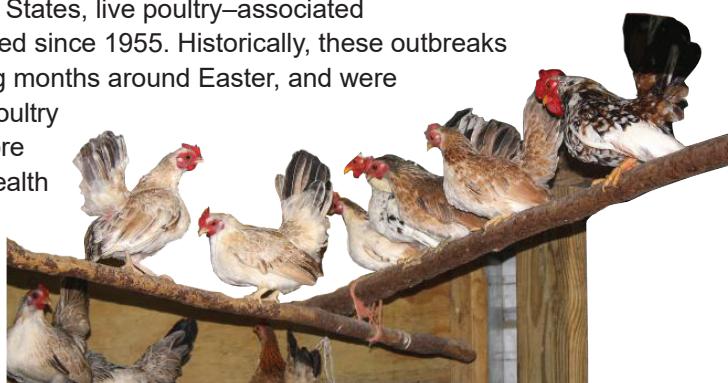
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EID Podcast: Backyard Poultry

Backyard poultry flocks have increased in popularity concurrent with an increase in live poultry-associated salmonellosis (LPAS) outbreaks. In the United States, live poultry-associated salmonellosis outbreaks have been documented since 1955. Historically, these outbreaks involved young children, occurred in the spring months around Easter, and were associated with birds obtained as pets. Baby poultry were often dyed bright colors, making them more attractive to young children. Currently, public health officials are identifying LPAS outbreaks linked to backyard poultry flocks that are affecting adults and children. The first multistate outbreak where the association with backyard flocks was recognized occurred in 2007.



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