

Bird flu hits British turkey farm

December 16 2016

Britain on Friday announced the discovery of a highly contagious strain of bird flu at a turkey farm, and sought to allay fears the outbreak could affect the traditional Christmas meal.

The H5N8 strain of [avian flu](#) was detected at a farm near Louth, a town in northeast England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said.

All of the more than 5,000 birds at the farm that have not died from the disease will be culled, Defra said.

The government also announced it was restricting the movement of animals and [animal products](#) around the affected site.

The H5N8 strain of the virus is highly infectious to poultry, but poses little danger to humans.

Cases of H5N8 have been reported in France, the Netherlands and Sweden in recent weeks, in both [migratory birds](#) and at farms.

A different strain, H5N1, has killed more than 420 people, mainly in southeast Asia, since first appearing in 2003.

Nigel Gibbens, the UK's chief veterinary officer, said any risk to public health was "very low" and "does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers", chiefly among Britons preparing for Christmas festivities which often include the traditional meal of roast turkey.

"There is not anticipated to be any impact on the supplies of turkeys or other birds over Christmas," Defra said.

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