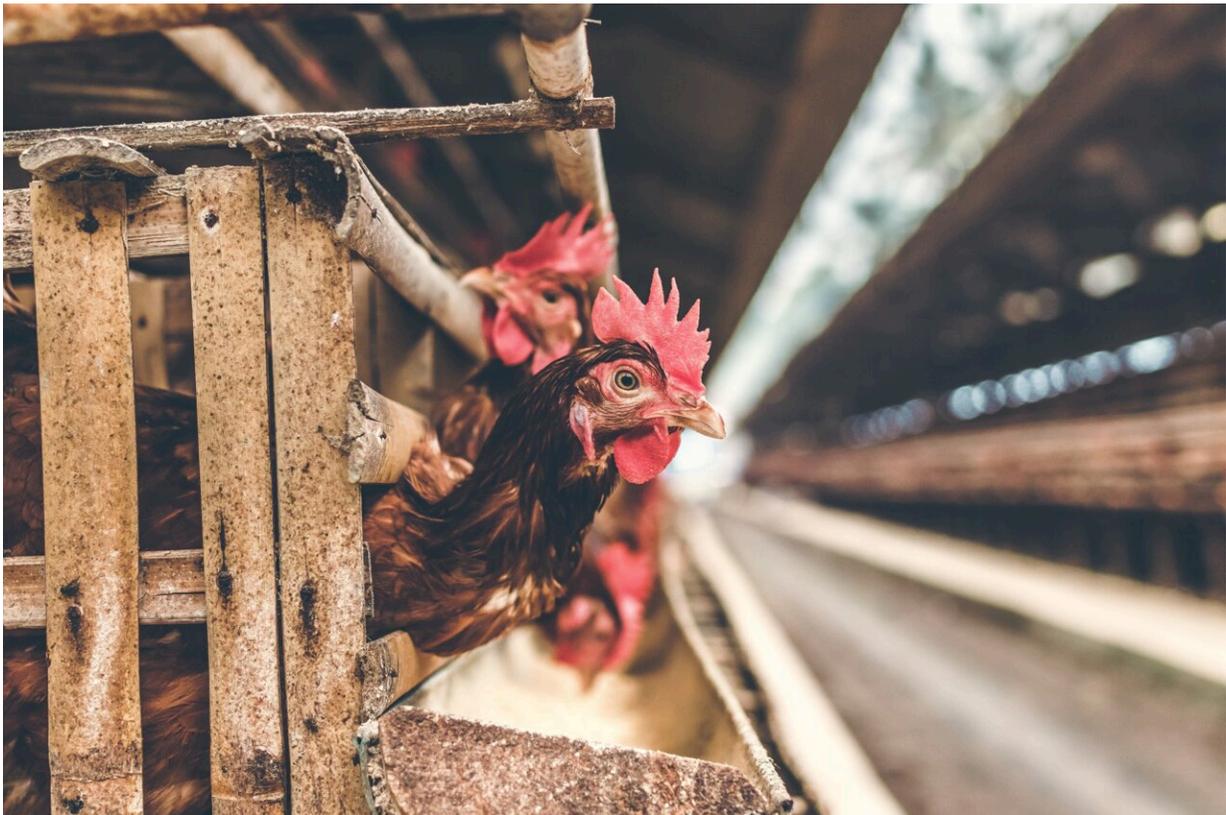


Dutch cull 300,000 chickens after bird flu outbreak

October 20 2022



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Dutch health authorities said Thursday they had culled around 300,000 chickens after the largest outbreak of highly contagious bird flu this year, saying almost six million birds have been killed so far in the

ongoing epidemic.

The latest outbreak of a highly contagious H5 strain of the virus hit a chicken farm at Heythuysen in the southern Limburg province, the Dutch food security agency NVWA said.

"We have immediately instituted a ban on transport" of all poultry products, the NVWA said, adding it included eggs, bird meat and bird manure.

Five other poultry farms within a radius of five kilometres (three miles) "are being screened and will be monitored for [bird flu](#) for the coming two weeks," the agency said in a statement.

Dutch authorities said Thursday they have culled some 5.8 million [birds](#) including [chickens](#), turkeys and aquatic birds at 98 locations across the country since the outbreak of the new strain of avian flu was first detected in October last year.

Agriculture Minister Piet Adema warned in a letter to parliament last week that the situation "is not sustainable".

"Not for the animals, or the poultry farmers and not for society," the minister said.

"I therefore believe we need to intensify our approach to bird flu," the minister said.

The country has ordered all poultry to be kept indoors since October 5 in a bid to curb the virus.

Authorities are attempting to prevent [farm](#) birds coming into contact with wild migratory ones to prevent the virus from spreading.

The Netherlands was worst hit in 2003, when a deadly strain of H7N7 [avian influenza](#) broke out, killing at least one person and infecting 255 flocks—leading to the culling of 30 million birds according to the National Library of Medicine.

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Citation: Dutch cull 300,000 chickens after bird flu outbreak (2022, October 20) retrieved 28 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-10-dutch-cull-chickens-bird-flu.html>

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