

Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission Report

USA Comments

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CHAPTER 2.7.12.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

Article 2.7.12.1.

1. For the purposes of *international trade*, avian influenza in its notifiable form (NAI) is defined as an *infection* of poultry caused by any influenza A virus of the H5 or H7 subtypes or by any AI virus with an intravenous pathogenicity index (IVPI) greater than 1.2 (or as an alternative at least 75% mortality) as described below. NAI viruses can be divided into highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza (HPNAI) and low pathogenicity notifiable avian influenza (LPNAI):
 - a) HPNAI viruses have an IVPI in 6-week-old chickens greater than 1.2 or, as an alternative, cause at least 75% mortality in 4-to 8-week-old chickens infected intravenously. H5 and H7 viruses which do not have an IVPI of greater than 1.2 or cause less than 75% mortality in an intravenous lethality test should be sequenced to determine whether multiple basic amino acids are present at the cleavage site of the haemagglutinin molecule (HA0); if the amino acid motif is similar to that observed for other HPNAI isolates, the isolate being tested should be considered as HPNAI;
 - b) LPNAI are all influenza A viruses of H5 and H7 subtype that are not HPNAI viruses.
2. Poultry is defined as ‘all domesticated birds, including backyard poultry, used for the production of meat or eggs for consumption, for the production of other commercial products, for restocking supplies of game, or for breeding these categories of birds, as well as fighting cocks used for any purpose’.

Birds that are kept in captivity for any reason other than those reasons referred to in the preceding paragraph, including those that are kept for shows, races, exhibitions, competitions, breeding or selling these categories of birds as well as pet birds, are not considered to be poultry.

3. For the purposes of *international trade*, this chapter deals not only with the occurrence of clinical signs caused by NAI virus, but also with the presence of *infection* with NAI virus in the absence of clinical signs.
4. For the purposes of *international trade*, a country should not impose immediate trade bans in response to a notification of *infection* with HPAI and LPAI virus in birds other than poultry according to Article 2.1.1.3. of the *Terrestrial Code*.
5. Antibodies to H5 or H7 subtype of NAI virus, which have been detected in poultry and are not a consequence of vaccination, have to be further investigated. In the case of isolated serological positive results, NAI *infection* may be ruled out on the basis of a thorough epidemiological investigation that does not demonstrate further evidence of NAI *infection*.
6. The following defines the occurrence of *infection* with NAI virus:
 - a) HPNAI virus has been isolated and identified as such or viral RNA specific for HPNAI has been detected in poultry or a product derived from poultry; or
 - b) LPNAI virus has been isolated and identified as such or viral RNA specific for LPNAI has been detected in poultry or a product derived from poultry.

For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, 'NAI free establishment' means an *establishment* in which the poultry have shown no evidence of NAI *infection*, based on surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9.

For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, the *incubation period* for NAI shall be 21 days.

Standards for diagnostic tests, including pathogenicity testing, are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*. Any vaccine used should comply with the standards described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 2.7.12.2.

The NAI status of a country, a *zone* or a *compartment* can be determined on the basis of the following criteria:

- ~~1. the outcome of a *risk assessment* identifying all potential factors for NAI occurrence and their historic perspective;~~
21. NAI is notifiable in the whole country, an on-going NAI awareness programme is in place, and all notified suspect occurrences of NAI are subjected to field and, where applicable, laboratory investigations;
32. appropriate surveillance is in place to demonstrate the presence of *infection* in the absence of clinical signs in poultry, and the risk posed by birds other than poultry; this may be achieved through an NAI surveillance programme in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9.

3. consideration of all epidemiological factors for NAI occurrence and their historical perspective.

Article 2.7.12.3.

NAI free country, zone or compartment

A country, *zone* or *compartment* may be considered free from NAI when it has been shown that neither HPNAI nor LPNAI infection has been present in the country, *zone* or *compartment* for the past 12 months, based on surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9. The surveillance may need to be adapted to parts of the country or existing *zones* or *compartments* depending on historical or geographical factors, industry structure, population data, or proximity to recent outbreaks.

If infection has occurred in a previously free country, zone or compartment, NAI free status can be regained:

1. In the case of HPNAI infections, 3 months after a *stamping-out policy* (including *disinfection* of all affected *establishments*) is applied, providing that surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9. has been carried out during that three-month period.
2. In the case of LPNAI infections, poultry may be kept for slaughter for human consumption subject to conditions specified in Article 2.7.12.18. or 2.7.12.19. or a *stamping-out policy* may be applied; in either case, 3 months after the *disinfection* of all affected *establishments*, providing that surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9. has been carried out during that three-month period.

Article 2.7.12.4.

HPNAI free country, zone or compartment

A country, *zone* or *compartment* may be considered free from HPNAI when it has been shown that HPNAI infection has not been present in the country, *zone* or *compartment* for the past 12 months, although its LPNAI status may be unknown, or when, based on surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., it does not meet the criteria for freedom from NAI but any NAI virus detected has not been identified as HPNAI virus. The surveillance may need to be adapted to parts of the country or existing *zones* or *compartments* depending on historical or geographical factors, industry structure, population data, or proximity to recent *outbreaks*.

If infection has occurred in a previously free country, *zone* or *compartment*, HPNAI free status can be regained 3 months after a *stamping-out policy* (including *disinfection* of all affected *establishments*) is applied, providing that surveillance in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9. has been carried out during that three-month period.

Article 2.7.12.5.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for live poultry (other than day-old poultry)

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the poultry showed no clinical sign of NAI on the day of shipment;
2. the poultry were kept in an NAI free country, zone or compartment since they were hatched or for at least the past 21 days;
3. the required surveillance, in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., has been carried out on the *establishment* within at least the past 21 days;
4. if vaccinated, the poultry have been vaccinated in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.

Article 2.7.12.6.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for live birds other than poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the birds showed no clinical sign of infection with a virus which would be considered NAI in poultry on the day of shipment;
2. the birds were kept in isolation approved by the *Veterinary Services* since they were hatched or for at least the 21 days prior to shipment and showed no clinical sign of *infection* with a virus which would be considered NAI in poultry during the isolation period;
3. the birds were subjected to a diagnostic test within 7 to 14 days prior to shipment to demonstrate freedom from *infection* with a virus which would be considered NAI in poultry;

Comment/rationale: we are recommending the re-wording of the testing time frame from “test 7 to 14 days prior to shipment” to “test within 14 days prior to shipment” because the current wording would appear the rule out the option of testing within 7 days prior to shipment. When feasible, testing as close to shipment as possible is desirable and provides greater assurance on the health status of the birds

4. the birds are transported in new containers.

If the birds have been vaccinated, the relevant information should be attached to the certificate.

Article 2.7.12.7.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for day-old live poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the poultry were kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched;
2. the poultry were derived from parent flocks which had been kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* for at least 21 days prior to and at the time of the collection of the eggs;
3. if the poultry or the parent flocks were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.

Article 2.7.12.8.

When importing from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for day-old live poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the poultry were kept in an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched;
2. the poultry were derived from parent flocks which had been kept in an NAI free *establishment* for at least 21 days prior to and at the time of the collection of the eggs;
3. the poultry are transported in new containers;
4. if the poultry or the parent flocks were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.

Article 2.7.12.9.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for hatching eggs

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the eggs came from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*;
2. the eggs were derived from parent flocks which had been kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* for at least 21 days prior to and at the time of the collection of the eggs;
3. if the parent flocks were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.

Article 2.7.12.10.

When importing from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for hatching eggs

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the eggs came from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*;
2. the eggs were derived from parent flocks which had been kept in an NAI free *establishment* for at least 21 days prior to and at the time of the collection of the eggs;
3. the eggs have had their surfaces sanitised (in accordance with Article 3.4.1.7.) and are transported in new packing material;
4. if the parent flocks were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.

Article 2.7.12.11.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for eggs for human consumption

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the eggs come from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*.

Article 2.7.12.12.

When importing from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for eggs for human consumption

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the eggs:

1. come from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*;
2. have had their surfaces sanitised (in accordance with Article 3.4.1.7.) and are transported in new packing material.

Article 2.7.12.13.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for egg products

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the egg products come from, and were processed in, an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*.

Article 2.7.12.14.

~~Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin~~ When importing from a country, *zone* or *compartment* not considered free from NAI, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for egg products

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the egg products are derived from eggs which meet the requirements of Articles 2.7.12.9., 2.7.12.10., 2.7.12.11. or 2.7.12.12.; or
2. the egg products were processed to ensure the destruction of NAI virus in accordance with Appendix 3.6.5.;
3. the necessary precautions were taken after processing to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of NAI virus.

Article 2.7.12.15.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for poultry semen

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the donor poultry:

1. showed no clinical sign of NAI on the day of semen collection;
2. were kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* for at least the 21 days prior to and at the time of semen collection.

Article 2.7.12.16.

When importing from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for poultry semen

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the donor poultry:

1. showed no clinical sign of HPNAI on the day of semen collection;
2. were kept in an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* for at least the 21 days prior to and at the time of semen collection.
3. [were maintained in an establishment in which the required surveillance, in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., has been carried out within at least the past 21 days;](#)
4. [if vaccinated, were vaccinated in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9., and the relevant information is attached.](#)

Comments/Rationale: Importation of semen from areas free of HPNAI (but possibly not free of LPNAI) at the very least should follow requirements for importing of live poultry from areas free of all NAI. The suggested change adds two more requirements for semen from areas free of HPNAI that are in place for live poultry imported from NAI free areas.

Article 2.7.12.17.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for semen of birds other than poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the donor birds:

1. were kept in isolation approved by the *Veterinary Services* for at least the 21 days prior to semen collection;
2. showed no clinical sign of infection with a virus which would be considered NAI in poultry during the isolation period;
3. were tested between ~~7 and~~ [within](#) 14 days prior to semen collection and shown to be free of NAI infection.

Comment/rationale: we are recommending the re-wording of the testing time frame from “test 7 to 14 days prior to collection” to “test within 14 days prior to collection” because the current wording would appear the rule out the option of testing within 7 days prior to

shipment. When feasible, testing as close to collection as possible is desirable and provides greater assurance on the health status of the birds

Article 2.7.12.18.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for fresh meat of poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the entire consignment of *fresh meat* comes from birds:

1. which have been kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched or for at least the past 21 days;
2. which have been slaughtered in an *approved abattoir* and have been subjected to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections to rule out the presence of NAI with favourable results.

Article 2.7.12.19.

When importing from an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for fresh meat of poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the entire consignment of *fresh meat* comes from birds:

1. which have been kept in an HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched or for at least the past 21 days;
2. which have been slaughtered in an *approved abattoir* and have been subjected to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections to rule out the presence of NAI with favourable results.

Note regarding Articles 2.7.12.18 and 2.7.12.19: Although not officially for comment, the United States has addressed these articles during previous comment sessions. These articles, which are some of the most important ones of this Code Chapter with respect to trade of poultry, continue to cause many trade impasses. Many Member countries are, in fact, free of HPNAI, but because of active and targeted surveillance programs, detect LPNAI, particularly in poultry raised in backyard environments. Studies have now documented that LPNAI is not transmitted by poultry meat, or one could say, that poultry meat is not a vehicle for transmitting LPNAI. While it may be clear to the Commission that when a country has detected LPNAI (but is free of HPNAI) that Article 19 of the Code Chapter should apply, many importing countries are misinterpreting the *Code* by requiring the exporting country that are HPNAI free to abide by Article 18, which requires a statement that the country is free of NAI.

The *Code* needs to be clear as to when trade restrictions are appropriate and necessary. While precautions do need to be taken when LPNAI is detected (and such precautions are already built into the Articles by requiring a statement that the *establishment* should be free of NAI), trade restrictions at the country or zone level need to be in proportion to the risk associated with the disease agent. Such clarity may be lacking ... and is being improperly applied, particularly when it comes to Point 1) of current Article 18.

Article 2.7.12.20.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for meat products of poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the *commodity* is derived from *fresh meat* which meets the requirements of Articles 2.7.12.18. or 2.7.12.19.; or
2. the *commodity* has been processed to ensure the destruction of avian influenza virus in accordance with Appendix 3.6.5.;
3. the necessary precautions were taken to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of NAI virus.

Article 2.7.12.21.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for products of poultry origin intended for use in animal feeding, or for agricultural or industrial use

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. these *commodities* come from poultry which have been kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched or for at least the past 21 days; or
2. these *commodities* have been processed to ensure the destruction of avian influenza virus (under study);

Note: The United States provided data and other information to support removing the “under study” clause. The AI virus is very heat labile and the information provided should be adequate to remove the clause. We understand that the Code Commission has referred this information to the AI ad hoc group for their consideration.

3. the necessary precautions were taken to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of NAI virus.

Article 2.7.12.22.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Authorities* should require:

for feathers and down (from poultry)

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. these *commodities* come from poultry which have been kept in an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment* since they were hatched or for at least the past 21 days; or
2. these *commodities* have been processed to ensure the destruction of avian influenza virus (under study).
3. the necessary precautions were taken to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of avian influenza virus.

Article 2.7.12.23.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Authorities* should require for the importation of:

meat or other products from birds other than poultry

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

1. the *commodity* has been processed to ensure the destruction of avian influenza virus (under study);

Note: The United States provided data and other information to support removing the “under study” clause. The AI virus is very heat labile and the information provided should be adequate to remove the clause. We understand that the Code Commission has referred this information to the AI ad hoc group for their consideration.

2. the necessary precautions were taken after processing to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of NAI virus.