

**French General Directorate for Food**

## **ACTION PLAN FOR VACCINATION AGAINST HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)**

### **Presentation of the scenario under consideration for vaccination in France**

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There has been a succession of episodes of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza of unprecedented gravity in Europe, as well as elsewhere in the world, leading to significant societal and economic consequences. The scale of these crises requires that we maximise our chances and back up prevention and control strategies with the vaccination of poultry. Vaccination is an additional preventive tool for addressing crises caused by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the future.

#### **THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE STRATEGY**

A referral was made to the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) seeking an evaluation of several scenarios from the epidemiological standpoint with a view to defining a strategy for the vaccination of poultry against HPAI. ANSES issued its opinion in two stages, an initial part dealing with the vaccination strategy for gallinaceous species (referral no. 2022-SA-0139) and a second additionally covering the vaccination of palmipeds in order to present a comprehensive strategy (referral no. 2022-SA-0165).

This opinion provides a framework for considering the initiation of a campaign of vaccination for the autumn of 2023, setting out priorities for target populations and geographical areas for implementation. These scientific factors were then juxtaposed with the technical, economic and husbandry aspects in order to arrive at a possible strategy for preventive vaccination for 2023, the goal being to forestall further runaway epizootics while at the same time keeping export impacts, operational feasibility of the vaccination campaign and cost under control.

#### **THE VACCINATION STRATEGY UNDER CONSIDERATION**

Preventive vaccination is the strategy currently favoured in France since emergency vaccination has been judged to be difficult to implement given the time required to acquire immunity following vaccine administration.

The vaccination strategy is defined around three criteria: target species, geographical coverage and time period.

- Target species: given the specific role of duck farms for epizootic dynamics in France as a whole, this species has been defined as a priority target for the vaccination strategy.

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- Geographical coverage: seeking complete national vaccination coverage, the strategy under consideration has been extended to the whole of metropolitan France, Corsica excluded.
- Vaccination period: although high-risk periods have historically been defined as falling within the winter season, a change in the dynamics of the disease has since been observed, and this entails a decision to vaccinate throughout the year.

To ensure the success of the strategy, preventive vaccination would be made mandatory on all commercial farms engaged in production. To supplement this, a voluntary vaccination strategy would be implemented for the vaccination of multiplier ducks in the foie gras industry where the hatching eggs and day-old chicks are placed exclusively on the national market.

In addition, due to a concern to conserve table egg production capacity and given the vulnerability of the sector due to past crises, vaccination of pre-adult layers (pullets) is being considered. A stock of vaccines will in that case be built up and used only if the need to do so is identified.

#### **The vaccination strategy under consideration in France:**

- Vaccination of commercial duck farms (Peking, Muscovy and Mulard) across the whole of metropolitan France, Corsica excluded, and throughout the whole year. Such vaccination would be mandatory for farms engaged in production and voluntary for multiplier farms whose products are placed exclusively on the national market.
- The building of a vaccine stock to allow vaccination of pre-adult layers (pullets).

## **THE FINAL DECISION**

The final decision on whether to implement vaccination in autumn 2023 will be taken in June if all the conditions have been met.

In the event of implementation of vaccination, France will notify its vaccination programme in advance to the Commission and to all Member States in compliance with delegated regulation (EU) no. 2023/361.

#### **For more information:**

- **Commission delegated regulation (EU) 2023/361** of 28 November 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and the Council as regards rules for the use of certain veterinary medicinal products for the purpose of prevention and control of certain listed diseases:  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023R0361&qid=1681975761645&from=EN>
- **OPINION issued by ANSES on the definition of a national vaccination strategy against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in metropolitan France:**  
<https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/SABA2022SA0165.pdf?download=1>
- **OPINION issued by ANSES on the definition of a national strategy for the vaccination of gallinaceous species against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza:**  
<https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/SABA2018SA0017Ra.pdf?download=1>