

MINISTER COUGHLAN RESPONDS TO AVIAN 'FLU IN ENGLAND

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mary Coughlan TD, this evening confirmed that the Management Committee of her Department's National Disease Control Centre met in response to confirmation by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in Britain of avian influenza in turkeys on a premises on the Norfolk/Suffolk border.

The Minister said that she was awaiting final results after preliminary test results were positive for the H5 strain and, in particular, whether or not it is H5N1 and whether it is a high or low pathogenic strain.

The Minister said that she and her officials had reviewed the Department's contingency arrangements and reassessed the risk of the introduction of the disease into Ireland. In this regard, officials are in contact with colleagues in DEFRA and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland.

Minister Coughlan said that, in view of the information currently available, she was satisfied that her Department has in place an extensive range of contingency measures, including sufficient legislative provisions. Ms Coughlan also said that she did not consider the necessity for any additional measures at this time but that as more information became available she would not hesitate to introduce further measures, should this be considered appropriate.

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