

## **Brits battle to contain bird flu as another 68,000 birds are culled**

Another 68,000 birds have been culled in England in efforts to contain an outbreak of the deadly bird flu, 56,000 ducks, 9,000 turkeys and 3,000 geese.

This latest cull was on a poultry farm in Suffolk and is the sixth farm to be affected.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) say the latest cull is a precautionary measure and the farm is within the existing surveillance zone.

There are very real concerns that workers at the farm have inadvertently transferred the virus from other farms where more than 28,600 turkeys, ducks and geese have already been slaughtered.

Officials say the latest cull is the result of new information about exposure risk and stress that all poultry keepers must immediately report any signs of the disease.

DEFRA says the latest farm is owned by the same company that operates Redgrave Park Farm near Diss on the Norfolk-Suffolk border, where the virus was first detected earlier this month; employee routes between the farms are now being monitored for signs of the disease spreading.

A 3km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone were immediately set up, and remain in place.

So far, bird flu has been confirmed at both the original site of the outbreak and one other nearby site owned by the same company.

The sixth farm affected apparently supplied poultry to the farm at the centre of the outbreak, however turkeys culled at two other farms, Stone House, in West Harling, and Bridge Farm, in Pulham, over fears they had been exposed to the disease, tested negative.

Tests on birds at Hill Meadow Farm in Knettishall on the Norfolk/Suffolk border however showed they had been infected with H5N1.

Grove Farm, Botesdale, Suffolk was also upgraded to a slaughter site on suspicion of having the disease last week, after dozens of birds were found dead by officials but initial tests on 5,500 turkeys slaughtered found the premises were free of disease.

Experts fear the deadly strain of H5N1 virus will eventually mutate into a form easily transferred between humans.

At present, the only way humans can contract the lethal virus is from infected birds.