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COMMISSION DECISION

of 12 December 2002

**on introducing vaccination to supplement the measures to control infections with low pathogenic
avian influenza in Italy and on specific movement control measures**

(notified under document number C(2002) 5051)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2002/975/EC)

(OJ L 337, 13.12.2002, p. 87)

Amended by:

	Official Journal		
	No	page	date
► <u>M1</u> Commission Decision 2003/436/EC of 16 June 2003	L 149	33	17.6.2003



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(notified under document number C(2002) 5051)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2002/975/EC)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Directive 90/425/EEC of 26 June 1990 concerning veterinary and zootechnical checks applicable in intra-Community trade in certain live animals and products with a view to the completion of the internal market ⁽¹⁾, as last amended by Directive 2002/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 10(4) thereof,

Having regard to Council Directive 89/662/EEC of 11 December 1989 concerning veterinary checks in intra-Community trade with a view to the completion of the internal market ⁽³⁾, as last amended by Directive 92/118/EEC ⁽⁴⁾, and in particular Article 9(4) thereof,

Having regard to Council Directive 92/40/EEC introducing Community measures for the control of avian influenza ⁽⁵⁾, and in particular Article 16 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) During 1999 and 2000 Italy has experienced outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H7N1 with devastating economic losses for the poultry industry. Prior to the epidemic a virus of low pathogenicity had been circulating in the area.
- (2) During monitoring for avian influenza the presence of low pathogenic avian influenza virus of subtype H7N3 was detected in the regions of Veneto and Lombardia in October 2002.
- (3) Currently the control of low pathogenic avian influenza infections is not covered by Community legislation.
- (4) The Italian competent veterinary authorities have taken control measures to avoid the spread of disease to other areas; however the infection cannot be contained sufficiently.
- (5) Low pathogenic virus may mutate to highly pathogenic virus and may cause severe disease outbreaks.
- (6) During the previous avian influenza epidemic in Italy a vaccination programme was approved by the Commission in connection with intensive monitoring and certain provisions for intra-Community trade in live poultry and poultry products.
- (7) As a follow-up of the vaccination campaign certain measures concerning movement restrictions for intra-Community trade of live poultry and poultry products were maintained by the adoption of Commission Decision 2002/552/EC ⁽⁶⁾.
- (8) The experience of the Italian vaccination campaign suggests that this has successfully stopped the spread of the low pathogenic avian influenza virus.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 224, 18.8.1990, p. 29.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 315, 19.11.2002, p. 14.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 395, 30.12.1989, p. 13.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 62, 15.3.1993, p. 49.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 167, 22.6.1992, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 180, 10.7.2002, p. 24.

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- (9) Avian influenza virus subtype H7N3 is responsible for the current infections, whereas the previous epidemic was caused by an H7N1 virus subtype.
- (10) The infection occurs at present in an area of Italy with dense poultry population.
- (11) In this context vaccination can be an effective tool to supplement disease control measures against avian influenza.
- (12) Where vaccination against avian influenza is practised movement restrictions for vaccinated poultry have to be implemented.
- (13) Italy has presented a vaccination programme to supplement the measures to control avian influenza in a limited area of Italy including specific movement restrictions.
- (14) Italy has authorised the use of two inactivated vaccines against avian influenza for the implementation of the programme. For the initial phase a homologous vaccine is obtained from the master seed strain CK/Pak/1995-H7N3 and for the following period starting from early 2003 a heterologous vaccine with the master seed strain A/CK/Italy/AG-473/1999-H7N1 shall be used.
- (15) Within a technical working group meeting the vaccination programme presented by Italy was reviewed.
- (16) Monitoring on vaccinated and unvaccinated poultry flocks shall be continued including the use of the serological test (iIFA-test) which had been approved by Commission Decision 2001/847/EC ⁽¹⁾.
- (17) Italy shall introduce specific movement restrictions related to vaccination of poultry and to intra-Community trade.
- (18) For reasons of clarity Decision 2002/552/EC should be repealed as its provisions are superseded by this Decision.
- (19) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The vaccination programme against avian influenza presented by Italy is hereby approved and shall be carried out in the area described in Annex I.

Article 2

The restrictions on movements of live birds, hatching eggs, table eggs and fresh poultry meat into, out of and within the area described in Annex I shall apply as laid down in the vaccination programme referred to in Article 1.

Article 3

1. No live birds and hatching eggs coming from and/or originating from the area described in Annex I shall be dispatched from Italy.
2. Live birds and hatching eggs coming from and/or originating from the territory of Italy outside the area described in Annex I can only be dispatched from Italy if:
 - no contacts or other epidemiological links in relation to avian influenza have been established between the holding of origin and with a holding or a hatchery situated in the area described in Annex I, and

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 315, 1.12.2001, p. 61.

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— the holding of origin is not located in any of the restriction zones established by the competent authority in relation with avian influenza.

3. No table eggs derived from poultry vaccinated against avian influenza and originating from the area described in Annex I, shall be dispatched from Italy.

Article 4

Animal health certificates accompanying consignments of live birds and hatching eggs from Italy shall include the words: 'The animal health conditions of this consignment are in accordance with Decision 2002/975/EC'.

Article 5

1. Fresh meat of poultry must be marked in accordance with Article 5 of Council Directive 91/494/EEC ⁽¹⁾ and shall not be dispatched from Italy if it is derived from:

- (a) poultry vaccinated against avian influenza;
- (b) avian influenza seropositive poultry flocks destined for slaughter under official control in accordance with the vaccination programme referred to in Article 1;
- (c) poultry originating from holdings located in a restriction zone, which shall be established based on a minimum radius of three kilometres around any poultry farm infected with low pathogenic avian influenza in accordance with the provisions laid down in the vaccination programme referred to in Article 1.

2. By derogation from paragraph 1(a) and (b), fresh meat from turkeys vaccinated against avian influenza with a heterologous vaccine of subtype (H7N1) shall not be marked in accordance with Article 5 of Council Directive 91/494/EEC and can be dispatched to other Member States, provided that the meat comes from slaughter turkey flocks which:

- (i) have been regularly inspected and tested with negative results for avian influenza as laid down in the approved vaccination programme, with particular attention to be paid to the sentinel birds.

For the testing of:

- vaccinated birds, the iIFA-test shall be used,
- sentinel birds, either the Haemagglutination-Inhibition Test (HI), the AGID-test or the ELISA-test shall be used. However, the iIFA-test shall also be used if necessary;
- (ii) have been clinically inspected by an official veterinarian within 48 hours before loading, with particular attention to be paid to the sentinel birds;
- (iii) have been tested serologically with negative results at the National Laboratory for avian influenza, by using the sampling and testing procedure laid down in Annex II to this Decision;
- (iv) must be sent directly to a slaughterhouse designated by the competent authority and be slaughtered immediately after arrival. The birds shall be kept separated from other flocks not complying with the present provisions.

3. Fresh turkey meat fulfilling the requirements as set out in paragraph 2 shall be accompanied by the health certificate laid down in Annex VI of Directive 71/118/EEC ⁽²⁾, which shall include under point IV(a) of the certificate the following attestation of the official veterinarian:

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 268, 24.9.1991, p. 35.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 55, 8.3.1971, p. 23.

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‘The turkey meat described above is in accordance with Decision 2002/975/EC’.

Article 6

Italy shall ensure that in the area described in Annex I:

1. Only disposable packaging material, or packaging material which can be effectively washed and disinfected, is used for the collection, storage and transport of table eggs.
2. All means of transport used for transporting poultry, hatching eggs, table eggs and poultry feedstuff must be cleaned and disinfected immediately before and after each transport with disinfectants in accordance with the methods of use approved by the competent authority.

Article 7

Movements of live poultry and hatching eggs coming from areas of Italy outside the area described in Annex I to other Member States shall only be allowed following five days advance notification to the central and local veterinary authorities of destination. The notification shall be dispatched by the competent veterinary authority.

Article 8

1. Italy shall notify to the Commission and to other Member States the date of the commencement of the vaccination, at least one day in advance.
2. The provisions of the Articles 2 to 7 shall be enforced from the date of the commencement of the vaccination.

Article 9

1. Italy shall, at six-month intervals, present a report containing information on the effectiveness of the vaccination programme referred to in Article 1.
2. This Decision, and in particular the period of time during which the movement restrictions provided for in Articles 2 to 7 shall continue to apply after the completion of the vaccination programme, shall be reviewed accordingly.

Article 10

Decision 2002/552/EC is repealed.

Article 11

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

▼M1*ANNEX I*

VACCINATION ZONE

Veneto Region*Verona Province*

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Albaredo d'Adige
Angiari
Arcole
Belfiore
Bevilacqua
Bonavigo
Boschi Sant'Anna
Bovolone
Bussolengo
Buttapietra
Calmiero area to the south of the A4 motorway
Casaleone
Castel d'Azzano
Castelnuovo del Garda area to the south of the A4 motorway
Cerea
Cologna Veneta
Colognola ai Colli area to the south of the A4 motorway
Concamarise
Erbè
Gazzo Veronese
Isola della Scala
Isola Rizza
Lavagno area to the south of the A4 motorway
Minerbe
Monteforte d'Alpone area to the south of the A4 motorway
Mozzecane
Nogara
Nogarole Rocca
Oppeano
Palù
Pescantina
Peschiera del Garda area to the south of the A4 motorway
Povegliano Veronese
Pressana
Ronco all'Adige
Roverchiara
Roveredo di Guà
S. Bonifacio area to the south of the A4 motorway
S. Giovanni Lupatoto area to the south of the A4 motorway
S. Martino Buon Albergo area to the south of the A4 motorway
S. Pietro di Morubio
Salizzole
Sanguinetto
Soave area to the south of the A4 motorway
Sommacampagna

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Sona
 Sorgà
 Trevenzuolo
 Valeggio sul Mincio
 Verona area to the south of the A4 motorway
 Veronella
 Vigasio
 Villafranca di Verona
 Zevio
 Zimella

Vicenza Province

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Agugliaro
 Albettonne
 Alonte
 Asigliano Veneto
 Barbarano Vicentino
 Campiglia dei Berici
 Castegnero
 Lonigo
 Montegalda
 Montegaldella
 Mossano
 Nanto
 Noventa Vicentina
 Orgiano
 Poiana Maggiore
 S. Germano dei Berici
 Sossano
 Villaga

Padova Province

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Carceri
 Casale di Scodosia
 Este
 Lozzo Atestino
 Megliadino S. Fidenzio
 Megliadino S. Vitale
 Montagnana
 Ospedaletto Euganeo
 Ponso
 S. Margherita d'Adige
 Saletto
 Urbana

Lombardia Region*Mantova Province*

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Acquanegra Sul Chiese
 Asola
 Bigarello

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Canneto Sull'oglio
 Casalmoro
 Casaloldo
 Casalromano
 Castel D'ario
 Castel Goffredo
 Castelfelforte
 Castiglione Delle Stiviere
 Cavriana
 Ceresara
 Gazoldo Degli Ippoliti
 Goito
 Guidizzolo
 Mariana Mantovana
 Marmirolo
 Medole
 Monzambano
 Piubega
 Ponti Sul Mincio
 Porto Mantovano
 Redondesco
 Rodigo
 Roncoferraro
 Roverbella
 San Giorgio Di Mantova
 Solferino
 Villimpenta
 Volta Mantovana

Brescia Province

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Acquafredda
 Alfianello
 Azzano Mella
 Bagnolo Mella
 Barbariga
 Bassano Bresciano
 Berlingo
 Borgo San Giacomo
 Borgosatollo
 Brandico
 Brescia area to the south of the A4 motorway
 Calcinato area to the south of the A4 motorway
 Calvisano
 Capriano del Colle
 Carpendolo
 Castegnato area to the south of the A4 motorway
 Castel Mella
 Castelvovati
 Castenedolo area to the south of the A4 motorway
 Castrezzato
 Cazzago San Martino
 Chiari
 Cigole

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Boccaglio
Cologne
Comezzano-Cizzago
Corzano
Dello
Desenzano del Garda area to the south of the A4 motorway
Erbusco area to the south of the A4 motorway
Fiesse
Flero
Gambara
Ghedi
Gottolengo
Isorella
Leno
Lograto
Lonato area to the south of the A4 motorway
Longhena
Maclodio
Mairano
Manerbio
Milzano
Montichiari
Montirone
Offlaga
Orzinuovi
Orzivecchi
Ospitaletto area to the south of the A4 motorway
Palazzolo sull'Oglio area to the south of the A4 motorway
Pavone del Mella
Pompiano
Poncarale
Ponteviso
Pontoglio
Pozzolengo area to the south of the A4 motorway
Pralboino
Quinzano d'Oglio
Remedello
Rezzato area to the south of the A4 motorway
Roccafranca
Roncadelle area to the south of the A4 motorway
Rovato area to the south of the A4 motorway
Rudiano
San Gervasio Bresciano
San Paolo
San Zeno Naviglio
Seniga
Torbole Casaglia
Travagliato
Trenzano
Urago d'Oglio
Verolanuova
Verolavecchia
Villachiera
Visano

▼M1*Bergamo Province*

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Antegnate
Bagnatica area to the south of the A4 motorway
Barbata
Bariano
Bolgare area to the south of the A4 motorway
Calcinate
Calcio
Castelli Calepio area to the south of the A4 motorway
Cavernago
Cividale al Piano
Cologno al Serio
Cortenuova
Costa di Mezzate area to the south of the A4 motorway
Covo
Fara Olivana con Sola
Fontanella
Ghisalba
Grumello del Monte area to the south of the A4 motorway
Isso
Martinengo
Morengo
Mornico al Serio
Pagazzano
Palosco
Pumenengo
Romano di Lombardia
Seriata area to the south of the A4 motorway
Telgate area to the south of the A4 motorway
Torre Pallavicina

Cremona Province

The vaccination zone comprises the territory of the following municipalities:

Camisano
Casale Cremasco-Vidolasco
Casaletto di Sopra
Castel Gabbiano
Soncino

*ANNEX II***SAMPLING AND TESTING PROCEDURE****1. Introduction and general use**

The developed indirect Immunofluorescence Assay (iIFA-test) is aimed at the differentiation between vaccinated/field exposed and vaccinated/non field exposed turkeys in the framework of a 'DIVA' (Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals) vaccination strategy using a heterologous subtype vaccine from the H7N3 field virus subtype.

2. Use of the test for the purpose of dispatching fresh turkey meat from the vaccination area in Italy to other Member States

Meat originating from turkey flocks vaccinated against avian influenza may be dispatched to other Member States provided that:

Blood samples shall be taken by the official veterinarian:

- from each group of turkeys destined for slaughter, which are kept in the same building of the holding in question,
- within 48 hours before sending the animals to the slaughterhouse,
- from at least 10 vaccinated animals chosen at random from each group.