

# BVA and BVPA response to Defra consultation on proposed remote veterinary inspections in avian disease control zones, in England

October 2023

## Who we are

1. The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom. With over 19,000 members, our primary aim is to represent,   
ry profession. We therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.
2. The British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA) is an active non-territorial division of BVA. The objective of the BVPA is to further the knowledge of its members, who are drawn from academia, research, government, commerce and practice, by holding educational and technical meetings. The Association also offers objective science-based advice and comment on issues affecting its members and the poultry industry in general.
3.   
consultation on proposed remote veterinary inspections in avian disease control zones in England.

## Amending the Order

4. **To what extent do you agree (Option 1 or Option 2) or disagree (Baseline) that the Order should be amended to provide powers to permit remote inspections? (Question 9)**  
Strongly agree
5. **If a change is made, do you consider the change should be limited to: Option 1 (slaughter only) or Option 2 (all types of pre-movement licence inspections)? (Question 10)**  
Option 2 (all types of pre-movement licence inspections)

During a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak the amount of work asked of the private veterinary surgeon, to enable the poultry industry to continue to provide safe eggs and meat to the public, is markedly increased. This causes issues since the number of experienced poultry vets is limited, leading to very busy vets dealing with highly stressful situations and a high workload. This can increase risk of error and also takes its toll on the mental health of the veterinary professional.

BVPA worked with APHA to draw up the remote inspection trial, which included detailed guidelines for both farmers and official veterinarians. Provision was made to ensure all birds on the premises could be seen, with safeguarding measures put in plardie04 reW\*nBTF3 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 237.77 2

For indicator species such as chickens

We support APHA taking a risk-based approach and considering the scale of the outbreak. However, this statement suggests that APHA would need to make a decision on remote inspections for every individual outbreak of AI, which could lead to confusion around the new legislation, making it harder for vets and keepers to implement. We would welcome further clarity on when remote inspections would or would not be permitted, and support APHA having the ability to require physical visits where this is necessary.

8.

