SELF-DECLARATION OF ARGENTINA AS A COUNTRY FREE FROM HIGH PATHOGENICITY AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)

Self-declaration sent to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), on 7 August 2023, by Dr. Ximena Melón, National Director for Animal Health of the National Service for Agri-Food Health and Quality (SENASA), a descentralized entity within the scope of the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this self-declaration is the reinstatement of the status of free country from High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus in accordance with the provisions of Article 10.4.6 of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code). The scope of this self-declaration covers the whole country.

The National Service for Agri-Food Health and Quality (SENASA) is the authority in responsible for enforcing health regulations to control, prevent and eradicate animal diseases that affect production and public health.

The start date for this self-declaration is 7 August 2023.

Susceptible population:

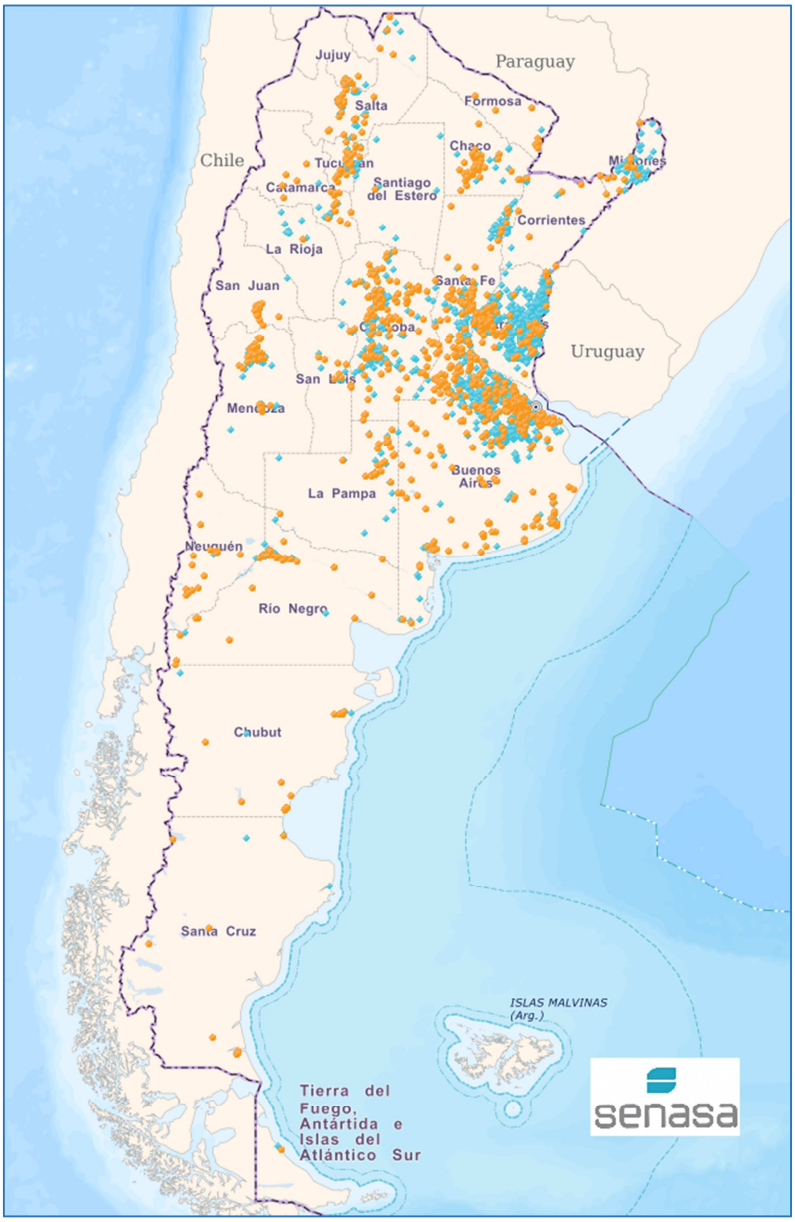
Poultry productive system in Argentina

According to the SENASA official registration, the poultry meat production counts with a total of 4033 establishments, of which 299 correspond to genetic establishments (grandparents and heavy breeding parents), 77 hatcheries and 3657 broiler production farms. Slaughter during 2022 was of 751,691,962 chickens.

Regarding the laying sector, it counts with a stock of more than 42 millions of laying hens in eggs production and 8,9 millions of rearing birds. A total of 1019 laying establishments are officially registered. Of these, 12 are genetics establishments, 6 are hatcheries and 1001 dedicated to rearing and egg production.

The data on poultry stock and productive units distribution are registered in the Integrated Animal Health Management System (SIGSA), the IT system officially managed by SENASA.

The location of the poultry meat and eggs productive units are shown in the following map:



Map 1: Location of the poultry productive units - Argentina – 2023. *Source: SENASA*

Argentine Republic borders

The Argentine Republic limits with the following countries:

- Border with CHILE (West and South).
- Border with BOLIVIA (North).
- Border with PARAGUAY (North).

- Border with BRASIL (Northeast and East).
- Border with URUGUAY (East).

II. Evidence that the disease is a notifiable disease in the entire country;

Regulation

The disease is a notifiable disease in Argentina due to the National Legislation since more than 25 years and the updated current Regulation is the SENASA Resolution N° 153 of 31 March 2021.

In the above mentioned Resolution the disease belongs to Group I, Section e: "*Notifiable Disease: disease of compulsory official notification included in the list that states in Group I of the Annex and which suspicious or confirmation must be immediately informed within the next 24 hours.*"

http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/345000-349999/348400/texact.htm

Structure and role of the Official Veterinary Service

The National Service for Agri-food Health and Quality (SENASA), created by Law 23.899 de 1990, is the autarchic organism in charge of the animal and vegetable health, as well as the safety of animal and plant origin foods.

The organizational structure of SENASA is established by the Administrative Decision 1881/2018 OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF THE CABINET OF MINISTERS AUTHORITIES AND STAFF which can be consulted at the following link: http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/315000-319999/317359/norma.htm

SENASA counts with 5,320 workers that develop profesional, technical, administrative, assistance and services tasks. More than 75% of staff are professionals and technicians.

The operative structure counts with 14 strategic Regional Centers, as per animal density and productive systems, throughout the country. Administratively, Argentina is divided into 23 Provinces. Likewise, distributed in these Regional Centres, SENASA has 377 local offices (with a local veterinarian in charge) and 634 inspection and/or certification offices.

On the other hand, there are sanitary barriers and border inspection posts where permanent controls are carried out by official staff. It should be noted that the National Service, due to service needs, assigns professionals in those destinations where a specific official control may be required.

Regional Centers are shown in the following map:

Map 2: Regional Centers of SENASA – Argentina. *Source: SENASA*

Likewise, the Accredited Veterinarians for Birds Health and Welfare are 493, private, who are accredited by SENASA, through training and updating, being the sanitary responsables in the poultry production establishments.

III. History of absence and eradication of the disease in the country:

1) History of the absence

Till 28 February 2023, when the first outbreak of HPAI (H5N1) in poultry was detected by RT-PCR, the disease has never been detected in the country, this is why Argentina was historically free of the disease base don the measures described bellow.

With the objective of early and rapid detect the circulation of the Avian Influenza (AI) virus, passive and active epidemiological surveillance is implemented since 1998 for poultry and other birds.

a) Passive epidemiologic Surveillance

HPAI is a notifiable disease in Argentina. SENASA has a regulation that establishes the criteria for the notification, care and registration of suspicions and outbreaks of diseases (Complementary information: SENASA Resolution No. 153/2021: http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/345000-349999/348400/norma.htm).

HPAI belongs to Group I, established in that regulation, which includes those notifiable diseases whose suspicion or confirmation must be reported to the Official Service within 24 hours.

Any natural or legal person is obliged to report suspected diseases immediately to SENASA. SENASA has several communication channels for people to make their notifications: by telephone, email (notificaciones@senasa.gob.ar), through the SENASA website (form "Notify SENASA animal diseases"; bot SENASA responde https://www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa/avisa-al-senasa-sanidad-animal), in person or by telephone to local SENASA offices distributed throughout the country (https://www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa/que-es-el-senasa/centros-regionales), by WhatsApp created specifically for notifications of suspected AI cases and also has a bot system) or through the SENASA Notifications app.

In case of non-compliance or transgressions, the offender will be liable to the penalties established in Chapter V of Law No. 27.233 and its Regulatory Decree No. DECTO-2019-776-APN-PTE of 19th November 2019. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it shall preventively adopt the planned actions stated in the SENASA's Procedures of Infractions Manual.

Once the notification is received, the official staff receiving the notification of suspicions evaluates the reported case, to determine whether to reject the notification (e.g. if it concerns non-susceptible species) or to confirm the suspicion by activating further attention.

The attention of the suspicion must be carried out within 24 hours of receiving the notification by means of a visit of the local Official Veterinarian of SENASA to the Establishment involved.

Taking into account the HPAI H5N1 and its epidemiological characterization, SENASA intensified the surveillance activities during the last years, as well as the specific sectors awareness through diffusion campaigns, specially with those in contact with the wild bird population, reinforced prevention measures of the disease and the diagnostic capacity, aiming at an early detection of the presence of HPAI in the National territory.

Since the first semester of 2022, the General Coordination Office for Institutional Communication of SENASA started a public information and dissemination campaign, with the objective of notifying all the prevention measures that each target group should consider in view of the detection and circulation of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Latin American countries, considering the migratory routes of wild birds and the possible entry of the disease into our country.

Since the first detection of HPAI in wild birds, and the subsequent declaration of emergency throughout the national territory -SENASA Resolution 147/2023- published on 16 February 2023, the institutional communication campaign intensified its actions by directing the information to the different audiences previously established.

The specific targets of the campaign were: Commercial poultry producers; organizations and personnel who observe and work with wild birds; backyard poultry owners; people who use guano or chicken litter in fruit-and-vegetable production and/or inputs for biopreparations; tourists; and the general public.

In addition, in the public institutional sphere, the following were identified as target audiences: the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation and provincial authorities, the National Parks Administration, the Argentine Birds Foundation, the AZARA Foundation, the Temaikén Foundation, the Ambiente y Medio Foundation, Rewilding, the review group of the National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, the Interjurisdictional Coordinating Body for Fauna, researchers related to wild species, Facebook forums on birds of prey, hunters' associations and Veterinary Associations.

The different communication pieces were disseminated through all the channels available by SENASA, including:

- Official website and microsite of Avian Influenza;
- Mailing to national poultry chambers and Senasa's own agents;

- Publications in the different official social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Telegram);
- Official radio broadcasting spots;
- Audiovisual material (YouTube Channel, Pampero TV, national airports).

The input material for all the informative pieces developed by the General Coordination Office for Institutional Communication is available at:

https://www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa/influenza-aviar/piezas-campana-de-comunicacion

According to the epidemiological situation during the different stages of the emergency, criteria were established for media and information attention, designating national spokespersons – represented by the main SENASA authorities - and regional spokespersons who could respond to the concerns and needs in each province of the country and communicate the previously planned messages.

In addition, educational material, leaflets and posters were developed and printed for the different target audiences. Presentations were also prepared for SENASA technicians to participate in awareness-raising sessions in the country's agrotechnical schools. The information materials were sent to all SENASA Regional Centers for distribution.

In this context, the number of notifications of suspicions received at SENASA increased considerably in the last months of 2022 and even more in 2023 to date.

With regard to information on notifications in 2023, data is available and updated every 24 hours online in an interactive dashboard available at https://qliksensebycores.senasa.gob.ar/sense/app/28a22e66-c131-434e-861d-213bab5efc80/sheet/a682a1b7-5139-4f00-bcee-e12b6f7db92e/state/analysis where indicators such as the number of notifications, their geographical distribution, type of production, etc. are presented.

The Attention to Notifications procedure can be overviewd in the following flowchart:

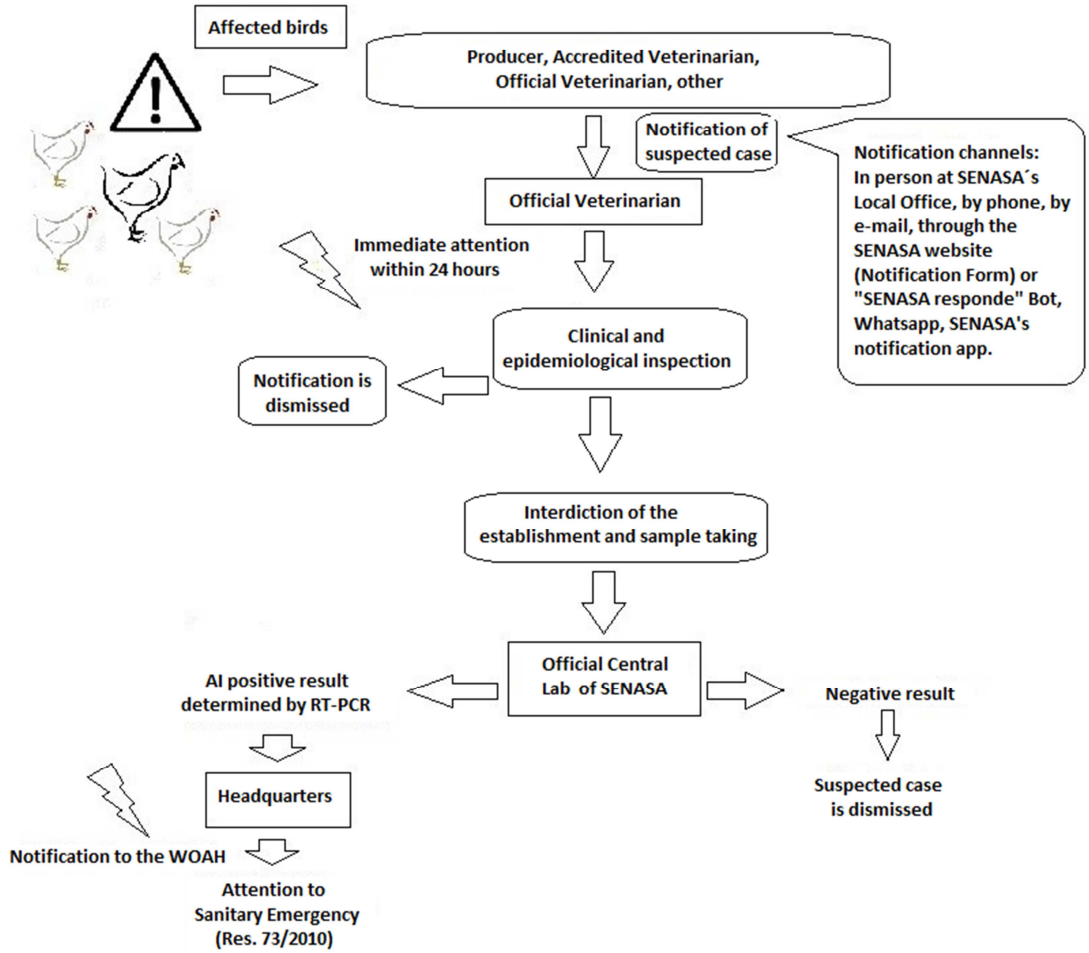


Figure 1: Flowchart of the notification procedure - *Source: SENASA*

b) Active Epidemiologic Surveillance

Active epidemiological surveillance comprises annual, systematic, risk-based sampling (targeting higher risk areas and subpopulations of birds), aimed at detecting the possible presence of AI virus.

For the design of the surveillance programme, the risk of year-to-year introduction of the disease via wild birds, mainly wetlands and water bodies, and the risk of dispersal linked mainly to the density of farms, are considered.

In addition, WOAH recommendations are considered according to Articles 10.4.26 to 10.4.30 of the Terrestrial Code for the statistical design of surveillance, aiming at including poultry populations as well as other birds populations.

All the samples are collected by official Agents of the Service and they are processed in the SENASA Official Laboratory, located in Martinez, province of Buenos Aires. From August 2023 on, a new Official Laboratory in the province of Santa Fe – Argentina, was incorporated.

Taking into consideration the last 10 years, the following table summarizes the results of Active Surveillance since 2013 that show the absence of the virus circulation.

Table with the results of the historical Active Surveillance.

Year	Number of samples	Lab result
2013-2017	84,487	**Negative**
2018-2022	75,980	**Negative**

Number of samples: corresponds to the sum of samples for serological and molecular diagnosis.

Specifically during the last 12 months (july 2022-july 2023) a total of 21,851 samples of poultry and other birds were taken and processed for the routine Active Surveillance for AI.

Avian Influenza Laboratory diagnostic techniques

Serological diagnostic:

- Indirect ELISA test of antibodies. For the detection of Influenza type A virus antibodies, the ELISA multispecies is used.
- Agar-gel immunodiffusion test (IDAG) for the detection of circulant antibodies type A.
- Haemagglutination-inhibition test (HI) specific subtype.

Molecular diagnostic:

- RT-PCR technique (Reverse Transcription - Polymerase chain reaction) in real time.

2) Situation since 28 February 2023 up to the present report date

First detection of HPAI virus (H5) was confirmed on 14 February 2023 in a wild bird of the Andean Geese *(Chloephaga melanoptera*) species, together with other dead birds, in the coast of the Pozuelos Lagoon, to the Northeast of the Jujuy Province, near the frontier with Bolivia.

Since then, from the total of 556 notifications in birds, 123 correspond to wild birds. From the 83 attended suspected cases, 8,4 % resulted positive to HPAI H5N1 (7 outbreaks[1] in wild birds).

The 7 outbreaks in wild birds occurred in the provinces of Jujuy, Córdoba, Neuquén, Buenos Aires, Chubut and Santa Cruz. The species identified were 6: Upland Goose *(Chloephaga picta)*, Kelp Gull *(Larus dominicanus)*, Andean Goose *(Chloephaga melanoptera)*, White-cheeked Pintail *(Anas bahamensis)*, Red-gartered Coot *(Fulica armillata),* Black-necked Swan (Cygnus melancoryphus) and geese.

These species inhabit our country and are not considered birds that perform large migrations; in the epidemiology of avian influenza they are considered bridge birds. Based on the temporal-spatial analysis and the wild species affected in Argentina, it can be concluded that the virus entered our country through migratory birds. With the information available to date, it has not been possible to identify the exact migratory species that could have carried the virus; however, it is likely that they are migratory birds carrying out regional migrations that have been advancing through South America. It is logical to think that wild birds

[1] Outbreak : designates the presence of one or more cases in an epidemiologic unit.

flying between Bolivia, Chile and Argentina may have been the ones that brought the virus to our country and then spread it through native or local species.

First detection in backyard birds was confirmed on February 17 2023 in the location of Alejo Ledesma in Cordoba Province, as of the attention to a suspected case in a field that had hens and turkeys for personal consumption, where 3 hens and a turkey were found dead.

From the 556 notifications in birds, 325 correspond to backyard birds. From the 280 attended suspected cases, 28,2 % resulted positive to HPAI H5N1 (79 outbreaks in backyard birds).

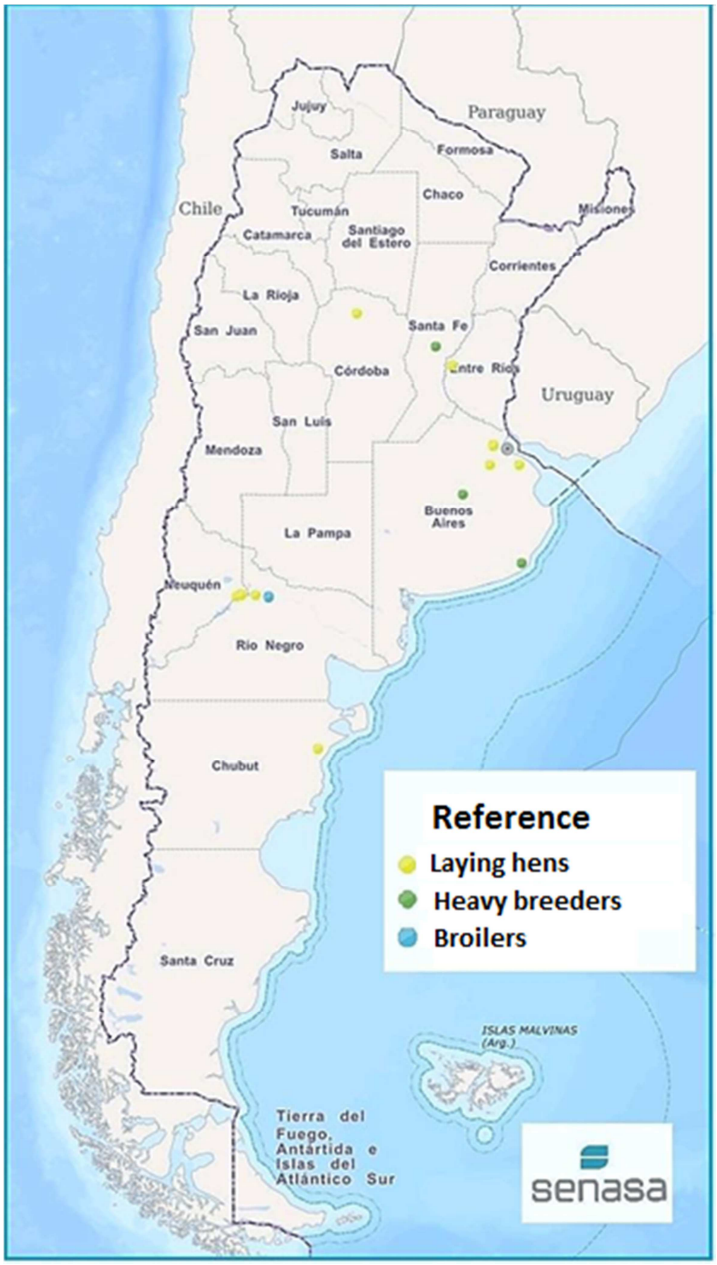
First detection in poultry was confirmed on 28 February 2023 in a broilers establishment, located in Rio Negro Province, General Roca Department, in Mainque city.

From the 556 notifications in birds, 104 correspond to poultry. From the 100 attended suspected cases, 18% resulted positive to HPAI H5N1 (18 outbreaks in poultry).

18 outbreaks in poultry correspond to 13 laying hens farms, 3 breeders farms and 2 broiler farms. The total of involved birds in the outbreaks (dead and culled) was of 2,214,532 birds.

The affected provinces were 7: Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, Córdoba, Neuquén, Chubut y Río Negro.

Map of outbreaks in poultry



Map 3: Outbreaks in poultry – Argentina – 2023. *Source: SENASA*

Attention of outbreaks of HPAI

The group of measures for the control of HPAI outbreaks are established by the Laws and Regulations of Argentina. Through the Resolution SENASA 73/2010 the "*Contingency Plan in face of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreaks*" is approved (http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/160000-164999/164475/norma.htm).

Since the beginning of the epidemic, the following sanitary measures were taken for all the outbreaks:

a) Continuation of the Official interdiction of the Establishment in force from the moment of the notification of suspicion, with a prohibition on entry for foreign people and vehicles.

b) Prohibition of entry and exit of birds, avian products and by-products.

c) Sanitary stamping out of the total of birds of the epidemiological unit and disposal in the place, or an authorized one destined to that end, of fallen animals together with eggs, beds, feathers, downs and elements used during the task.

d) Epidemiological census and documental evaluation of the traceability of entries and exits of birds, poultry products and by-products of the Establishment 14 days previous to the beginning of the event.

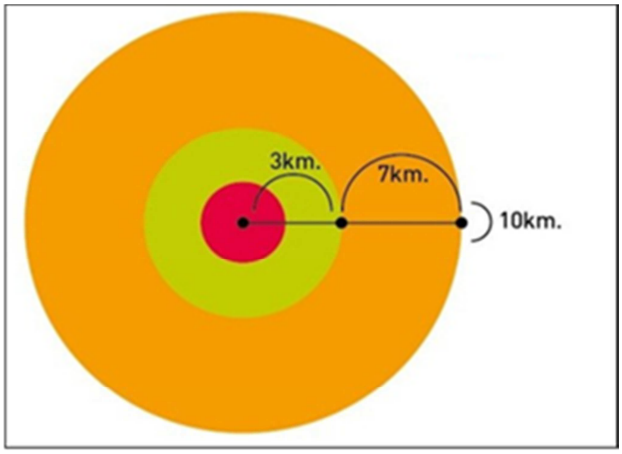
e) Cleaning and disinfection of the facilities (storehouses, warehouses, feeding and drinking troughs, machinery, etc.) once the stamping out and disposal of dead birds and risk materials had finished. A complementary second cleaning and disinfection can be repeated after the first one.

f) Zoning in face of the confirmation of the outbreak and simultaneously with the actions in the affected farm, is described as follows:

The **Sanitary Control Zone (SCZ**) is established as of an outbreak in poultry birds and it is conformed by the perifocal zone (3 km around the outbreak) and a surveillance zone (7 km around the preifocal one).

f.1) Epidemiologic Surveillance and raking in the SCZ

Following the Contingency Plan, the epidemiologic raking starts simultaneously in each holding of the established SCZ to the attention of a AI H5/H7 outbreak. If new water flows, water mirrors and/or lagoons are identified, they are georeferenced. In the visited place(s) or holding(s) it must be stated whether compatible symptoms or deaths in the last 14 days were recorded. In case it applies, it will be treated as a suspected case.



Aiming at an early detection of the HPAI virus presence, surveillance is done within the perifocal zone. In case any Establishment is found into the perifocal zone of three kilomentres (3Km) a sample taking must be carried out to make a molecular diagnostic (RT-PCR) within the seven (7) days of the outbreak attention and it is repeated with a weekly frequency.

While in the poultry Establishments inside the Surveillance Zone seven kilometres (7 km), a sampling for diagnostic RT-PCR must be carried out within the fourteen (14) days from the outbreak attention and it must be repeated every fourteen (14) days.

f.2) Movement control in the SCZ

- *Entry control into the SCZ*

Perifocal Zone (3Km): it is prohibited the entry of live birds, bedding and guano. The interdiction will reach other nearby holdings or with epidemiological linkage, that will be established by SENASA according to the risk evaluation.

The entry of eggs for consumption and poultry meat is allowed with the corresponding supportive sanitary documentation, while the entry of fertile eggs and birds with destination to slaughter will be evaluated by SENASA according to risk.

Surveillance Zone (7 KM): entry of male chicks and female chicks, rearing birds, for re-population of poultry holdings. Once the birds have entered, they are subjected to molecular surveillance. The entry of eggs for consumption and poultry meat is allowed with the corresponding supportive sanitary documentation, while the entry of fertile eggs and birds with destination to slaughter will be evaluated by SENASA according to risk.

- *Exit Control into the SCZ*

Perifocal Zone (3Km): the exit of bedding and guano is prohibited.

The exit of live birds, fertile eggs and eggs for consumption is allowed from farms located in the Zone provided that at least TWO (2) PCR negative results have been done with a minimun difference of THREE (3) days, and breeder registry (broilers) or production parameters sheet (laying hens or breeders) without sanitary news within the FOURTEEN (14) days prior to the exit.

Surveillance Zone (7Km) Live poultry, fertile eggs and table eggs are allowed to leave if they comply with surveillance with at least one negative result within SEVEN (7) days prior to the date of exit, and breeder (broilers) or production parameter sheet (layers or breeders) with no sanitary news in the FOURTEEN (14) days prior to exit.

The surveillance in the 18 **sanitary control zones (ZCS),** conformed as of the poultry outbreaks included the systematic samplings, the ones done previously to the movements of exit and the process of study of sentinel birds. 11.417 samplings were taken.

g) Closure of outbreak and lifting of the interdiction once at least 28 days have elapsed, after the tasks of stamping out (including the cleaning and disinfection after the stamping out), as per the Terrestrinal code, Chapter 10.4.6, WOAH.

h) Study of sentinel birds as a condition for re-population in poultry Establishments.

The information on the outbreaks was updated daily and it is available in the SENASA website at the following interactive chart:

In Spanish:

https://qliksensebycores.senasa.gob.ar/sense/app/dbcf0d66-6771-47cb-93a6-13a5eb64cb0c/sheet/64418b73-17b5-4480-ae50-cd9167513a52/state/analysis

In English:

https://qliksensebycores.senasa.gob.ar/sense/app/dbcf0d66-6771-47cb-93a6-13a5eb64cb0c/sheet/bac1ee73-6cb4-4673-873b-c36cdc6b23cc/state/analysis

3) Recovery of HPAI free country status

The stamping out, cleaning and disinfection of the last active outbreak in poultry (locality of Poblet, department of La Plata, province of Buenos Aires) were completed on 9 July 2023. At least 28 days have elapsed since that date which, together with the outbreak and surveillance actions described above, meet the requirements for the reinstatement of HPAI free status.

In the context of the active surveillance actions implemented between the date of completion of the stamping out, cleaning and disinfection tasks of the last outbreak (9 July 2023) and the date of the report (7 August 2023), a total of 1,105 samples were officially collected and processed, all of them negative for AI.

IV Measures to maintain HPAI freedom in the country

a) *Import control:* The importation of live birds or poultry commodities requires prior authorization from SENASA.

The shipment must be covered by the international veterinary certificate issued by the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country, which certifies compliance with the current sanitary requirements established by SENASA according to the recommendations of the WOAH. The current requirements for live birds and poultry genetics are available at http://vgs.senasa.gob.ar/expoimpo2/impo2.php (Spanish only).

At the point of entry into Argentina, the commodities are subject to an official identity and documentary control, where the correspondence of the shipment with the sanitary certification issued by the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country is verified. In case of non-conformities, re-export is possible. If the controls are satisfactory, entry into Argentina is authorized.

When import conditions require compliance with post-entry controls, in the case of live birds and poultry genetics, the imported consignment is moved under official documentation to the post-entry isolation site authorized by SENASA. During this period, the consignment is subjected to diagnostic tests under official supervision in laboratories authorized by SENASA, together with inspections carried out by official SENASA veterinarians. Only if the results are satisfactory and there are no sanitary developments, the isolation is lifted and the consignment can be authorized for its entry in Argentina.

b) *Biosecurity and infrastructure:* SENASA, through its Resolution 1699/2019, establishes the requirements for sanitary authorization, biosecurity, hygiene and management of commercial poultry establishments (see SENASA Resolution 1699 of 2019 in Spanish, available at
http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/330000-334999/333207/norma.htm)

The veterinarians accredited in poultry health of each poultry establishment are responsible for their compliance, which is controlled by SENASA through scheduled and unscheduled inspections.

c) *Contingency plan:* The sanitary actions to be carried out in the event of an outbreak are regulated by SENASA Resolution 73/2010 as detailed above.

d) *Training:* Private veterinarians accredited in poultry health and welfare and official veterinarians receive regular trainings.

In September 2022, a simulation exercise was carried out in HPAI in Esperanza (province of Santa Fe) with the participation of 75 people, including SENASA personnel, public-private institutions, accredited veterinarians and personnel from the Official Veterinary Services of neighboring countries.

e) *Preventive sanitary alert:* When HPAI occurred in South American countries, SENASA issued an alert resolution (SENASA Resolution 803/2022) dated 12 December 2022, which provided the regulatory support that allows streamlining administrative procedures for the provision of goods and services in a more agile way according to the context of sanitary emergency. Available in Spanish at:
http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/375000-379999/376605/norma.htm

f) *Sanitary emergency regulations:* When the first case of HPAI in wild birds was confirmed, a sanitary emergency was declared by means of SENASA Resolution 147/2023 of 16 February 2023. For the text of this resolution (in Spanish) access
http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/375000-379999/379625/norma.htm

g) *Complementary measures:* Complementary sanitary measures were established in view of the declaration of sanitary emergency due to High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the ARGENTINE REPUBLIC, by means of Resolution 431/2023, such as the prohibition of exhibitions and concentrations of birds. Available in Spanish at:
http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/380000-384999/383704/norma.htm

h) *Incorporation of personnel:* In territory, border posts and sanitary barriers, headquarters and laboratory. As part of the emergency measures, 365 new agents have been incorporated in 2023, distributed according to the needs identified in each Regional Center and the different central areas with competence in dealing with the emergency.

i) *Budget reinforcement for SENASA:* The Ministry of Economy of the Nation ordered a budget reinforcement of ONE BILLION TWO HUNDRED MILLION ARGENTINE PESOS (1,200,000,000,000) or its equivalent USD 4,918,033, in order to meet the expenses caused by the sanitary emergency caused by the HPAI outbreaks.

j) *Economic assistance to affected commercial farms:* A strategic measure to enhance the effectiveness of disease notification and containment measures was the decision to provide economic assistance to affected commercial producers, which was adopted by means of Resolution 638/2023 of the Ministry of Economy of the Nation (available in Spanish at: http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/380000-384999/383889/norma.htm).

The measure contemplates a budget of ARS 7.5 billion (more than USD 25 million) and is being implemented through a streamlined mechanism for making payments to producers.

k) *Awareness:* In order to raise awareness to small and large producers, technicians, accredited veterinarians, physicians and the general population on the need to report suspected cases of AI, awareness campaigns are being carried out. These can be found on SENASA's official website (www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa), Instagram (senasaargentina), Facebook (SENASA Argentina), X [formerly known as Twitter] (Senasa_AR), Linkedin, YouTube (SENASA).

l) *Public-private interaction:* All measures implemented and draft regulations are agreed with the National Commission for Bird Health and Welfare (CONASA, for its initials in Spanish). This commission is made up of official and private representatives related to the sector. The participation of production representatives in the Commission also generates a commitment of collaboration from this sector in the implementation of the proposals emanating from the Commission.

m) *Active epidemiological surveillance:* According to Articles 10.4.26 to 10.4.30 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code, it is carried out with a statistical design that includes both poultry and non-poultry populations.

n) *Surveillance in wild animals:* SENASA signed collaboration agreements with the State Environmental Authorities (Wildlife) and National Parks for both active and passive epidemiological surveillance.

o) *Public Health:* SENASA participates in inter-institutional working groups with the Ministry of Health of the Nation, as well as with the Ministries of Health of the Provinces.

V Conclusion

Considering that:

- Prior to the occurrence of outbreaks of HPAI in February 2023, Argentina had been free from this disease.
- According to Article 10.4.3 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code, HPAI is a notifiable disease in the whole country.
- Official stamping out measures including cleaning and disinfection of all detected outbreaks were adopted and completed on 9 July 2023.

- In compliance with Article 10.4.6 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code, 28 days (two incubation periods) have elapsed after the stamping out, cleaning and disinfection of the last detected outbreak and no HPAI was detected in the country.
- Epidemiological surveillance has been carried out in accordance with Articles 10.4.26 to 10.4.30 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code.
- Additional measures have been taken in terms of outreach, awareness raising, financial assistance to affected commercial farms (compensation) and budgetary and personnel reinforcement to SENASA to efficiently deal with and contain the outbreaks.
- Poultry commodities are imported according to Articles 10.4.7 to 10.4.22 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code.

The WOAH Delegate of Argentina, Dr. Ximena Melón, declares that the country complies with the requirements to be considered free country from High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) as of 7 August 2023 in accordance with Article 10.4.6 of the current WOAH Terrestrial Code and consistent with the information provided in WAHIS.

Annex I

Statement to be included in the self-declaration document.

I, the undersigned, **Ximena Melón**

Delegate of **Argentina**

to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), takes responsibility for the self-declaration of freedom from

High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI)

(disease)

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(iii) Any direct or indirect consequences of any nature arising from or relating to the use of the information contained in a self-declaration.

Drawn up on **07**/**08**/**2023**

Signature of the Delegate:

[Signed]

Annex II

HPAI outbreaks in poultry in Argentina between 28/2/2023 and 14/6/2023

Outbreak #	Outbreak ID (WAHIS)	Location	Genotype	Type of farm	Number of animals	Sampling cause	Date of confirmation	Date of completion of cleaning and disinfection
19479	OB_114756	Mainque General Roca	H5N1	Broilers	225340	Mortality	28/2/2023	17/3/2023
19514	OB_115219	General Alvear	H5N1	Heavy breeders	32950	Mortality	2/3/2023	10/4/2023
19545	OB_115607	Mar del Plata	H5N1	Heavy breeders	19687	Mortality	5/3/2023	17/5/2023
19558	OB_115608	Senillosa	H5N1	Laying hens	10500	Mortality	7/3/2023	30/3/2023
19604	OB_115648	Mainque General Roca	H5N1	Broilers	450000	Sudden death, respiratory difficulties. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19479.	10/3/2023	10/4/2023
19626	OB_116028	Allen	H5N1	Laying hens	217000	Mortality, cyanotic comb and claws	15/3/2023	5/5/2023
19697	OB_116297	Colonia Cavour	H5N1	Heavy breeders	14560	Supplementary sampling of SCZ of outbreak #19559.	19/3/2023	31/3/2023
19737	OB_116802	El Espinillo	H5N1	Laying hens	2752	Supplementary sampling of SCZ of outbreak #19345.	27/3/2023	29/3/2023
19726	OB_116803	Lobos	H5N1	Laying hens	50207	Mortality	29/3/2023	29/4/2023
19745	OB_117130	Gaiman	H5N1	Laying hens	407886	Mortality	4/4/2023	30/5/2023
19842	OB_117870	Pilar	H5N1	Laying hens	34500	Mortality- cyanotic comb, wattle edema	25/4/2023	3/7/2023
19845	OB_117871	Plottier	H5N1	Laying hens	20200	Mortality- Color change in claws and comb. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19634.	25/4/2023	29/6/2023
19883	OB_118317	Pilar	H5N1	Laying hens	61000	Mortality – Face edema - Lack of energy. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19842.	5/5/2023	4/7/2023
19884	OB_118319	Plottier	H5N1	Laying hens	26900	Mortality-Comb and wattle edema. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19845.	6/5/2023	5/7/2023
19893	OB_118318	Pilar	H5N1	Laying hens	10000	Mortality- Reduced egg production -Lack of energy. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19842.	9/5/2023	1/6/2023
19934	OB_119020	General Racedo	H5N1	Laying hens	15350	Mortality	19/5/2023	22/5/2023
19948	OB_119785	General Racedo	H5N1	Laying hens	17000	Increased mortality, diarrhea, lack of energy. Located in the SCZ of outbreak #19934.	30/5/2023	2/6/2023
19967	OB_120231	La Plata	H5N1	Laying hens	28900	Mortality- cyanotic comb, head edema	14/6/2023	9/7/2023