I am writing to inform you that the Scotland-wide Avian Influenza Prevention Zone has been extended and will expire at 00:01 on 28 February 2017. Within the zone, all poultry and captive birds are still required to be kept indoors, or otherwise kept separate from wild birds. Heightened biosecurity measures also continue, including the requirement to make bird feed and water inaccessible to wild birds, implement vermin control, and provide disinfectant at entrances and exits.

An AI Prevention Zone was first declared from 6 December 2016 until 17:00 on 6 January 2017. Since then, the risk level for Avian Influenza incursions into flocks in the UK has been raised to ‘low to medium’ for poultry or captive birds, and ‘high’ for wild birds. Cases of HPAI H5N8 have also been confirmed in poultry in Lincolnshire in England and Carmarthenshire in Wales, as well as wild birds across Great Britain (including a peregrine falcon found in Dumfries and Galloway).

In light of these confirmed cases across Great Britain and the increased risk levels, extensions to the Prevention Zones are in effect in Scotland, England and Wales until 28 February. The GB ban on gatherings of poultry, game birds and waterfowl also remains in force, and wild bird surveillance measures have been increased across the UK.

We are well prepared to respond to any suspicion of disease in Scotland.

I trust that this information is helpful.

FERGUS EWING