Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



New Zealand's approach to animal health communication

WOAH Regional Seminar for Focal Points of Communication for Asia and the Pacific

Colombo, Sri Lanka

11th November 2026

New Zealand in one minute







A well known landscape

New Zealand is known for its distinctive landscapes and wildlife.

The operational reality

Our animal health system relies on partnerships across farmers, veterinary services, laboratories, wildlife networks, industry and government.

The role of Biosecurity New Zealand

We protect New Zealand from harmful pests and diseases that could affect our economy, environment and way of life.

The role of communications in a biosecurity response

Early detection

Help people recognise unusual animal health events and report them promptly.

Readiness

Maintain trusted channels before an event, so information can move quickly.

Trust under pressure

During an event, perceptions, misinformation and imagery can quickly affect support.







Communication is not separate from the animal health system; it helps the system function.

New Zealand H5N1 example

The detections created an immediate need to shift from preparedness messaging to clear response information.

- No additional detections identified as at **today**
- Including no detections in poultry



A practical example of engagement as part of the animal health system

Target priority audiences

Bird owners and outdoor users were prioritised because their actions could reduce future impacts.

Make action memorable

Simple prompts translated a complex threat into practical behaviour: **Watch. Separate. Scrub.**

Prepare response assets early

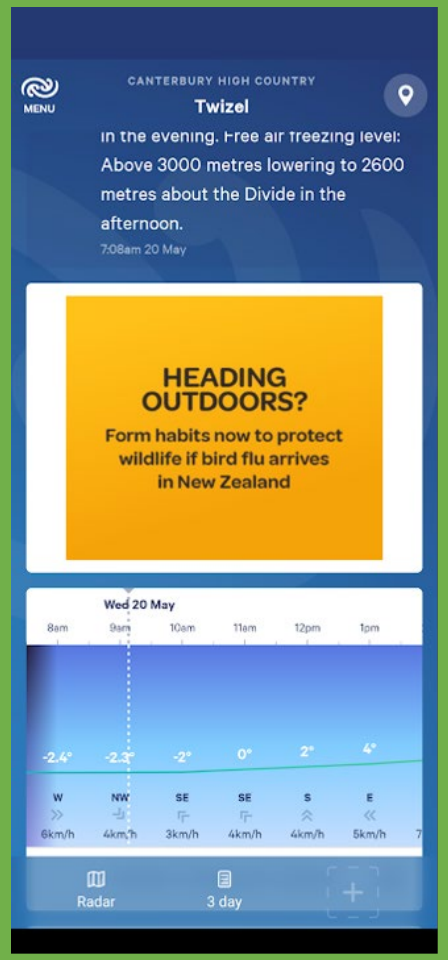
Messaging, signage, creative assets and media plans were **developed before** they were needed.

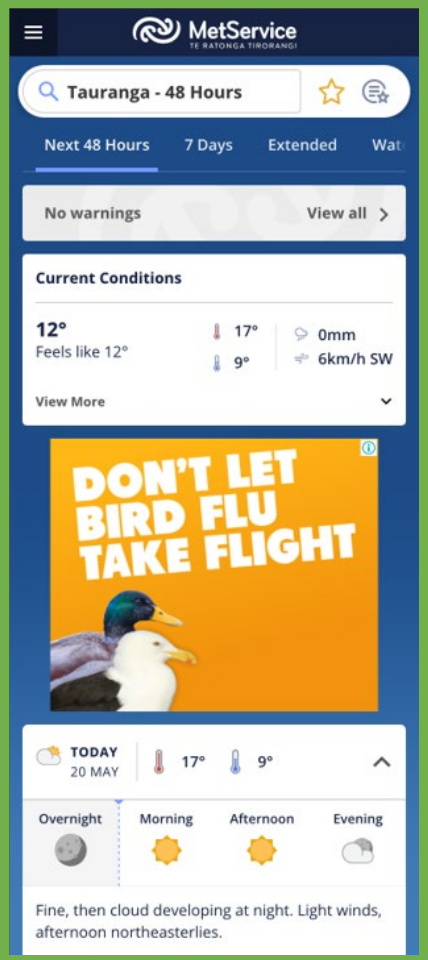




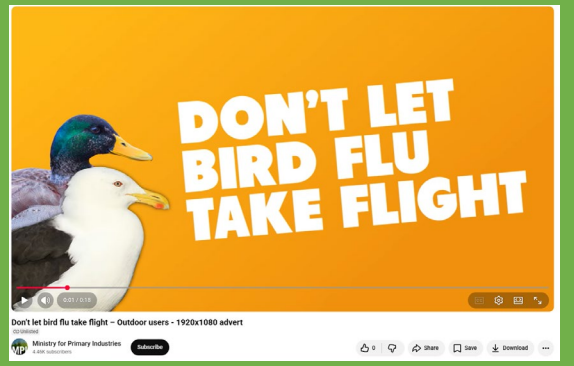


Digital adverts



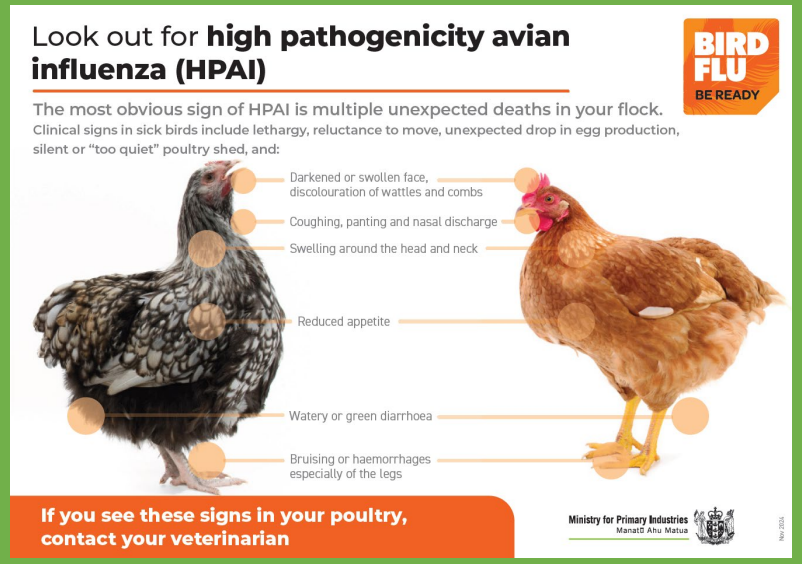








Resources



Above: a poster for bird owners, outlining signs of H5 bird flu.

Right: A booklet providing accessible, engaging information about steps bird owners can take to be ready for bird flu.



Below: More than 15 fact sheets tailored to different topics and audiences



Out-of-home advertising









Preparedness enabled rapid activation

Fast activation

Pre-developed creative assets, messaging and media plans could be adapted and deployed quickly.

Clear shift in action

The identity moved from “Bird flu – be ready” to “Bird flu – know what to do”.

Established channels

Partner networks were ready to share aligned information with their audiences.

Key lesson: Build relationships, messages and usable products before the pressure of a response.

H5 bird flu campaign: objectives and reflections

Objectives

Increase awareness and understanding.

Encourage bird owners and outdoor users to adopt practical biosecurity behaviours before detection.

Establish processes, networks and response-ready assets for rapid activation.

What went well

Targeted messaging reached audiences most able to reduce future impacts.

Partner networks extended reach and supported consistent information.

Pre-developed assets enabled a rapid shift from readiness to response.

Evaluation showed increased awareness and reported behaviour change.

What could be improved

Around 40% of bird owners still had low-to-moderate concern.

Ongoing communication is needed rather than relying on a one-off campaign.

Future activity should strengthen engagement with older and rural audiences.

Continue measuring understanding, trust and behaviour, not reach alone.

Veterinarians as a trusted source of advice

Why engage veterinarians

- Improve recognition, surveillance and prompt reporting.
- Extend trusted advice through established relationships with farmers, bird owners and rural communities.
- Prepare clinics for enquiries, triage and biosecurity decisions.



How we engaged

- Practice guidance covering recognition, reporting and what to expect after notification
- Webinars delivered through veterinary and professional networks
- Presentations and in-person professional engagement
- Podcasts and profession-specific media



What this enabled

- Consistent advice through organisations and channels the profession already uses.
- Clearer pathways for reporting suspected disease to MPI.
- A two-way route for questions, feedback and refinement of guidance.
- Greater outreach to the primary sector through private veterinarians.

NZVA New Zealand Veterinary Association Te Pae Kīrehe

VETERINARY COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND Te Kaunihera Rata Kararehe o Aotearoa

Veterinary-specific resources



- Things to do now before HPAI arrives at your clinic
- HPAI decision pathway (triage, field response, closing actions)
- Telephone triage - Flowchart for assessing calls about poultry and birds
- History taking - Questionnaire for managing calls about sick poultry and birds
- Isolation procedure for high suspicion of HPAI
- Suggested equipment list - checklist for HPAI triage area
- PPE minimum level required
- Clinical considerations for diagnosis
- Euthanising birds with suspected or confirmed HPAI
- Disposal of carcasses and other material
- Personal hygiene and guide to disinfectants

NZVA New Zealand Veterinary Association Te Pae Kōrehe





VETERINARY COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND
Te Kaunihera Rata Kararehe o Aotearoa

Veterinary clinic considerations during an HPAI outbreak

1. History
2. Avian Medicine Capability
3. Health and Safety Risks
4. Biosecurity and Transmission Risk
5. Cost Implications
6. Welfare of the sick bird
7. Local Authority Responsibilities





Veterinary engagement used multiple professional channels, with guidance tailored to the decisions veterinarians might face in practice.

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

What this case study shows

1

Define

Define the audience and the behaviour needed.

2

Equip

Provide practical guidance and ready-to-use materials.

3

Connect

Work through trusted partners and professional networks.

4

Measure and adapt

Assess reach, recall, attitudes and behaviour, then address gaps.

Preparedness communication is operational capability, built through relationships, guidance, trusted networks and adaptable resources before they are urgently needed.

Ngā mihi

Contact us for more information:
Lia Missena
Lia.Missena@mpi.govt.nz

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua