



OIA26-0675

8 September 2026

Jodie Bruning
jodie@bruning.net.nz

Dear Jodie,

Thank you for your email of 18 August 2026 requesting information relating to the vaccination of endangered bird species in response to H5N1. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

New Zealand has three confirmed detections of H5N1 high pathogenicity avian influenza (H5 bird flu). New Zealand's third case of H5N1 bird flu was confirmed on 21 August in a northern giant petrel, found dead on a remote Cape Palliser beach in the Wairarapa.

New Zealand is well prepared to respond to H5 bird flu and is working to protect poultry production and reduce impacts on wildlife and communities. Response and surveillance work has intensified in close coordination with industry partners and other agencies.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Ministry of Health, and Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora) are working together with the poultry industry and local government on surveillance, planning, and response. Over the past 12 months, through surveillance and monitoring activities more than 2,500 wild birds and 12,500 commercial poultry were tested.

Further information can be found on the MPI website as part of the H5N1 Bird Flu awareness campaign.

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/pest-and-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/animal-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/bird-flu/about-bird-flu-and-the-risk-to-nz>

On 19 August you refined your request to the following:

1. 2024-2025 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

For the period 1 January 2024 to 18 August 2026:

- Please provide the species-specific evidence relied upon by MPI to estimate the risk of serious disease, mortality, population decline or extinction from H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b in kākāpō, takahē, kakī/black stilt, tūturuatu/shore plover and kākāriki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet.*
- Please provide the principal records showing how the known or estimated risk from H5N1 was weighed against the known and uncertain risks associated with vaccination and the necessary capture, handling, restraint, blood sampling and repeated boosting of these threatened birds.*
- Please provide the principal scientific evidence relied upon by MPI concerning the relevance of the H5N1 HI results obtained in takahē to expected protection against H5N1, including evidence relied upon to extrapolate those findings to the four species in which H5N1-specific HI testing was not undertaken.*

2. REGISTRATION AND EVIDENTIAL BASIS FOR A012218

- The identity of the manufacturer and supplier of A012218, including the country and manufacturing facility from which the vaccine supplied to New Zealand originates.
- The identity and provenance of the H5N2 vaccine strain, including its complete strain designation, year and geographical origin, H5 clade, and genetic relationship to contemporary H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b viruses.
- The principal efficacy, safety, potency and stability studies or assessments relied upon by MPI in approving A012218, including identification of the species in which the relevant studies were undertaken. Where these studies are already identified in an existing regulatory assessment or bibliography, provision of that record and the studies held by MPI which materially informed the approval would satisfy this part of the request.
- Please provide the principal existing record or records explaining why the Delegate Decision states that efficacy trials and data were sufficient to assess while the approved label states that 'Full efficacy and potency data is pending'. Please identify the efficacy and potency information that remained outstanding at registration, whether it has subsequently been supplied, and any assessment of that information held by MPI.
- Please provide the evidence relied upon to support the label claim that A012218 may 'aid in reducing mortality', including whether this was demonstrated through viral challenge and, if so, the identity and clade of the challenge virus.
- Please provide the principal scientific evidence relied upon by MPI to conclude that A012218 is expected to provide protection against H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, including any antigenic matching, cross-reactivity, neutralisation or challenge evidence held by MPI.
- Given that A012218 is registered and labelled for use in chickens, please provide the regulatory authorisation and principal scientific assessment relied upon for its use in *kākāpō*, *takahē*, *kakī*/black stilt, *tūturuatu*/shore plover and *kākāriki* karaka/orange-fronted parakeet, including any assessment of species-specific safety, dose, immunogenicity or expected efficacy.
- Please provide the anticipated dose and booster regime for each threatened species and the principal evidence relied upon to support those doses and intervals, particularly given that the approved A012218 label states that duration of immunity is not established.

3. Cost, funding and decision to proceed

For the period 1 January 2025 to 18 August 2026, please provide:

- The principal record or records identifying the criteria, thresholds or risk-benefit considerations used to determine when the H5N1 threat was sufficient to justify commencement of threatened-species vaccination.
- The principal record or records concerning the significance attributed to H5N1 detections in migratory seabirds in Australia and the basis upon which these detections contributed to the decision to commence vaccination in New Zealand.
- The principal records identifying the criteria used to determine which species and populations should be prioritised, where vaccination would "provide the greatest protection", and when the programme should be extended through subsequent tranches.
- The principal records documenting MPI's role, including that of the Chief Veterinary Officer where applicable, in approving, recommending or advising upon commencement or extension of the programme.

4. COST AND FUNDING

For the period 1 January 2025 to 18 August 2026, please provide:

- The appropriation and programme from which MPI's involvement in the 2026 vaccination of approximately 300 core breeding birds is funded, including expenditure associated with the purchase, importation, registration, storage and supply of vaccine, and whether this expenditure is being met from MPI's existing baseline or additional H5/H5N1 preparedness or response funding.*
- The principal record approving or authorising MPI expenditure on the programme or MPI's contribution to it, identifying the amount approved, the source of funding, who authorised the expenditure, and any material conditions attached to that funding.*
- Where held, the principal proposal, briefing or recommendation supporting that expenditure which records the scientific, biosecurity or conservation justification for it.*

For your request to be fully assessed, it would require a search through a large quantity of information, that cannot be clearly determined without a full review of each individual document. The broad nature of the request makes it substantial in scope. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA - *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

However, you may be interested publicly available information, relating to the bird flu response that can be found at the following links:

- www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/pest-and-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/animal-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/high-pathogenicity-avian-influenza
- <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/pest-and-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/animal-disease-threats-to-new-zealand/high-pathogenicity-avian-influenza/about-avian-influenza-and-the-risk-to-nz>
- <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/70513-One-Health-approach-for-HPAI-H5N1>

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely,



Angus McKay
Director Avian Influenza