



## Preparedness and Response to Emerging Veterinary Disease Outbreaks

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### **France experience with poultry HPAI vaccination**

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Since 2015, France has experienced 5 epizootic waves of HPAI, with a total of almost 3,000 infected farms, leading to the slaughter of over 40 million poultry.

This situation has become totally unbearable because of the risk to public health, the distress of farmers and the exhaustion of human and financial resources.

For these reasons, the option of a strategy of preventive vaccination of ducks was considered to slow the spread of the virus.

The first ducks were vaccinated on 1 October 2023. Vaccination is compulsory for all farms with more than 250 meat ducks. More than 61 million ducks were vaccinated against HPAI between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024. Two inactivated vaccines are used: the VOLVAC vaccine produced by Boehringer Ingelheim and the RESPONS vaccine produced by CEVA. These DIVA vaccines are effective against the 2.3.4.4.b H5N1 clade.

In accordance with WOA standards and EU regulation 2023/361, a system of active and passive surveillance of vaccinated birds has been put in place to verify the absence of viral circulation.

Given the success of the first campaign, with only 10 outbreaks of HPAI during the 2023/2024 season, the vaccination strategy has been renewed since 1st October 2024.