



## Bird Flu News 26 – 31 May 2006

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### Bird flu may remain for years: experts

June 01, 2006

Rome: UN experts said that they still have "a long way to go" before fully understanding how bird flu spreads.

They however, warned that the virus will remain a concern "for years to come" on Wednesday.

Speaking on the sidelines of an international conference here, officials from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) said that wild bird migrations and the illegal trade in infected animals play a key factor in spreading the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus.

"The conference identified the gaps in our knowledge and provided us with better information on the situation," said Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer.

"But we still have a long way to go before we can fully understand this disease, especially as far as wildlife is concerned," added Gideon Bruckner of the OIE's scientific department.

One of the problems, scientists face is that they still do not know whether the virus can become endemic in wild birds such as ducks and geese and whether these animals can carry the disease without showing any symptoms.

More than 300 experts from over 100 countries met at FAO's headquarters in Rome on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss the spread of the virus.

The virus has led to the culling of 200 million domestic fowl and death of at least 127 people worldwide since 2003

Experts said that while they now have a better knowledge of the spread of the disease in Europe and the Middle East, serious concerns remain about the situation in Africa and Asia.

"We are more concerned (about the virus) in certain parts of the world, but there have been strong advances in reducing the effects of the disease and in making food safer in other areas," FAO's senior officer for the Infectious Diseases Group, Juan Lubroth said.



"The crisis is not going to go away in six months' time. We will need to keep our guard up for years to come," Lubroth added.

Officials expressed concern that certain governments, including those of China and Indonesia, were misreporting the extent of the spread of the virus in their countries.

They then called for more funds to improve early detection systems and veterinary services as well as to provide financial compensation to affected farmers.

The Americans remain bird-flu free to date while there is no indication yet that the virus has mutated in a way as to spark human-to-human infections, experts said.

CNN-IBN - New Delhi, India

### **New bird flu outbreak near Nigeria**

Fri Jun 2, 2006

NIAMEY (Reuters) - Scientists in Europe have confirmed a new outbreak of deadly H5N1 bird flu in southern Niger, near the border with Africa's most populous country Nigeria, a senior local government official said on Friday.

Tests carried out in Europe confirmed the presence of H5N1 in samples taken from the village of Boko Mai Gao, around 10 km (6 miles) from the border with Nigeria's Kano state, said the official, who declined to be named.

The discovery comes three days after Niger, landlocked and among the poorest countries on earth, described its epidemiological situation as "calm".

The H5N1 strain of bird flu was first confirmed in Niger in late February, but it took until April to start culling poultry in the affected areas.

Scientists worry that poor health and veterinary systems in Africa could allow the virus to spread undetected among millions of domestic fowl living in houses and back yards.

Several countries in West Africa, including Niger's neighbours Nigeria and Burkina Faso, have confirmed outbreaks of the deadly H5N1 bird flu, but so far no cases have been detected among humans.

The only human cases confirmed so far on the African continent have been in Egypt, where six people have died out of 14 known human infections, and one in Djibouti, according to the World Health Organisation, which says at least 124 people have been killed around the world since 2003.

Reuters

### **Two siblings record another bird flu cluster death in Indonesia**

June 03, 2006

Indonesia's local examination found out another bird flu cluster death in the country, Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari said here Friday.

Supari said that a seven year-old girl who died on Friday was positively contracted by avian influenza virus based on local laboratory test and her 10 year-old brother who died on May 29 had similar signs.

"I think it is a cluster," she told reporters.

"The characteristic of germ (suffered by the boy) is very similar (with the girl's), and now their mother and father are suffering from flu. They are all in the Pamulang district," she said.



The minister suggested to conduct stamp-out of all livestock soon in area of one kilometer of the location.

She said currently Indonesia's local test recorded 37 out of 50 people contracted with the H5N1 virus had died.

The country was suspected to have the largest cluster of human bird flu death in the world last month when seven members from the same family died of bird flu in North Sumatra province.

As the disease expands all over the world, experts fear that the virus can mutate into a certain form that easily transmits from human to human, which will kill millions of people.

Source: Xinhua

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