

Bird Flu News 13-15 March 2006

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Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza

13 March 2006

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	4
China	0	0	0	0	8	5	7	5	15	10
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	17	11	11	10	28	22
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
Thailand	0	0	17	12	5	2	0	0	22	14
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	12	4
Viet Nam	3	3	29	20	61	19	0	0	93	42
Total	3	3	46	32	95	41	32	21	176	98

Total number of cases includes number of deaths.

WHO reports only laboratory-confirmed cases.

Pakistan tests for bird flu after new chicken deaths - officials

03.13.2006, 04:36 AM

KARACHI (AFX) - Pakistan is investigating a possible second outbreak of bird flu after poultry farmers threw around 2,000 chicken carcasses on a dumping ground, officials said.

The dead birds were discovered in the southern city of Hyderabad, sparking fears among the public and prompting the local authorities to order extensive precautionary measures, the local mayor said.

The scare comes as Pakistan waits to learn from a British laboratory whether birds found with the H5 strain in northwestern Pakistan last month had the deadly H5N1 strain.

'We have summoned samples of the dead birds from Hyderabad to test in the laboratory,' said Mohammad Afzal, spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Livestock.

He said initial reports suggested the cause of death might be Newcastle Disease -- a viral condition endemic in Pakistan which causes respiratory and other problems -- but that had not been confirmed.

The authorities in Hyderabad, 150 kilometers from here, have carried out tests on more than 350 poultry farms, Hyderabad mayor Kanwar Naveed Jamil told Agence France -Presse.

'We have set up a task force to monitor all poultry farms in the district to ensure observance of protective measures in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines,' Jamil said.

'We have got about samples from 250 farms already tested, which are negative, but we are still waiting for the results of about 100 farms. A number of unregistered farms are also being located,' he said.

Pakistan earlier this month slaughtered 25,000 chickens at two farms in the North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan after confirming the presence of the H5 bird flu virus.

The agriculture ministry's Afzal said they are awaiting test results from the European Union's Reference Laboratory for avian influenza in Weybridge, England to find out whether H5N1 was involved.

'The laboratory is overburdened with work and we are repeatedly requesting them to carry (out) further tests to confirm which sub-category of N series was found,' Afzal said.

The broad H5 virus category only kills birds, unlike the highly pathogenic H5N1 sub -type of the virus that has claimed about 90 human lives in Asia and Turkey.

AFX News Limited

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Myanmar tests show first case of bird flu

Mon Mar 13, 2006 6:20 AM GMT



BANGKOK (Reuters) - Myanmar has found the H5N1 bird flu virus in chickens in what is believed to be the secretive country's first case of the deadly disease, but there was no sign of human infection, a U.N. official said.

"The information is there is no human case so far," said the U.N. official in Yangon, who declined to be named.

The case emerged on March 8 after 112 chickens died on a farm in Aung Myae Thar Zan township near Mandalay, about 430 miles (700 km) north of Yangon.

Officials destroyed a flock of 780 birds and sent samples for testing at government laboratories in Mandalay and Yangon.

"They have carried out some tests and they believe that they have identified H5N1," Laurence Gleeson, an FAO official in Bangkok, told Reuters.

The government reported its findings on the Mandalay outbreak to the FAO and the OIE, the Paris - based international animal health body, on Monday.

Dr. Tang Zhengping, the FAO representative in Yangon, said samples had also been sent to laboratories in Australia and Thailand.

He said vaccines were needed to protect poultry against the disease.

He did not know if foreign experts would be allowed to visit the site, but he said the military government had been cooperating with the FAO on bird flu issues.

"We have close cooperation. I am satisfied," he said.

The military-ruled country is seen by some international health experts as a potential black hole in the global fight against the disease, which has killed 97 people worldwide.

While neighbouring China, Thailand and Laos have been battling a disease which swept across much of Asia in late 2003, Myanmar's junta had insisted the country was bird-flu free.

Experts feared the virus would go unreported -- either through lack of surveillance or a government cover-up -- long enough to mutate into a form that passes more easily between humans and trigger a pandemic that could kill millions.

Yangon said in December it would tell the world if bird flu were detected in the country.

It has also worked with U.N. agencies to step up surveillance in the countryside, including monitoring of prime stopover points for wild birds which could bring the virus from neighbouring countries.

By Darren Schuettler

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H5 strain of bird flu detected in Afghanistan

2006-03-13 18:00:17



KABUL, March 13 (Xinhuanet) -- The H5 strain of bird flu has been found in Afghanistan, the United Nations said Monday.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization said in a statement five swab samples from poultry farms in Kabul and Jalalabad tested positive on Monday for H5, and that tests were under way to discern the subtype.

"There is a high risk that the virus detected is H5N1, but other possibilities remain at this time," the statement said.

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Azerbaijan says three people killed by bird flu

Mon Mar 13, 2006 10:34 PM GMT

BAKU (Reuters) - Azerbaijan said on Monday bird flu had killed three people, in the country's first known cases in humans. Azerbaijan is a neighbour of eastern Turkey, which has had several human deaths from bird flu. The country also borders Russia, Iran, Georgia and Armenia.

The infected people were thought to be members of a family from the Salyan region in southern Azerbaijan who died in hospital this month. They had kept poultry in their house, a common practice in rural Azerbaijan.

"Initial analysis from the laboratory shows that the three people who had died did so as a result of bird flu," said Health Ministry spokeswoman Samaya Mamedova.

The results came from a mobile laboratory brought into the country from Cairo on Monday. There was no word on results of tests on samples Azerbaijan sent to a laboratory in Britain approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

WHO said on Monday the virus had killed at least 98 people worldwide since late 2003, confirming that a girl in Indonesia was the 22nd killed by the virus there.

The girl, aged 12, died on March 1. Her 10-year-old brother died the previous day after being diagnosed with dengue haemorrhagic fever, a mosquito-borne virus, the WHO said, adding it would never be known if he was also infected with H5N1. Bird flu had been found in chickens in the children's household. Human victims of H5N1 contract the virus through direct contact with infected birds.

However, there are fears the virus could eventually mutate into a form that passes easily from person to person, sparking a pandemic that could kill millions and cripple the world economy.

"If the pandemic is severe, the economic impact is likely to be significant, though predictions are subject to a high degree of uncertainty," the International Monetary Fund said on Monday.

In a matter of weeks, H5N1 has spread deep into Europe, taken hold in Africa and flared anew in Asia.

By Rufat Abbasov

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Bird flu confirmed in Jalgaon, Maharashtra

New Delhi March 14, 2006



The central government today said bird flu cases have been reported from four areas in Maharashtra, and it has ordered culling of 75,000 birds in the region to prevent its spread.

"We have decided to cull 75,000 birds following confirmation of bird flu cases," Upma Chawdhry, joint secretary in the department of animal husbandry, said today.

She said 50 rapid response teams would be deployed to monitor and provide assistance in the areas around Jalgaon in Maharashtra. Quarantine area is spread over 1,250 sq kms around the area.

In reply to a query, Chawdhry said one of the four cases related to commercial poultry and all of them were pertaining to backyard poultry.

She said the samples were sent to the Bhopal laboratory on February 25 for tests.

Press Trust of India

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Hungarian researchers find H5N1 bird flu vaccine for human

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

BUDAPEST, March 14, 2006 (AFP) - Hungarian researchers have devised a vaccine for humans against the current form of the H5N1 bird flu virus, Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany said Tuesday.

This vaccine was developed by the Hungarian company Omnivest and has been approved by the country's pharmaceutical authorities, he told a press conference at the firm's laboratories at Bilsborosjeno, near Budapest.

The vaccine however only works on the current form of the H5N1 virus and is not intended as a shield against a feared mutated form.

Showing journalists a vial of the vaccine, Gyurcsany said it "contains six micrograms (of an active agent), enough for one person to be immunised against the H5N1 virus."

"This is a product manufactured from an aluminium and phosphate viral gel, of which nobody else at the moment has the (production) technology" he added.

The vaccine would be used to protect people working in close proximity to diseased birds.

"If the virus were to mutate, we would not have to experiment with new technology but would be able to manufacture a real vaccine within eight weeks," Gyurcsany said Tuesday.

"What is even more important, our national pharmaceutical institute (OGYI) has given us the green light to commercialise" the vaccine in Hungary, he said.

In its present form, H5N1 is transmissible amongst birds, and humans can catch it if they are close to fowl which carry the virus.

But it cannot be transmitted from human to human. The fear is that the virus may acquire the genes to do this, triggering a global pandemic.

Hungarian researchers have been working for six month to manufacture a vaccine against the current form of H5N1. In October, Hungarian Health Minister Jenő Rácz said a prototype vaccine being developed in Hungary for use against the deadly Asian strain of bird flu had produced positive results on humans.

"Clinical trials gave positive results, the blood of the (human) guinea-pigs produced antibodies," Rácz then said.

Developing a prototype vaccine is a necessary step towards rapidly manufacturing a real vaccine against the potentially deadly H5N1 virus, in the event it mutates to a form that can be transmitted from human to human, thus causing a possible pandemic.

At the time, French pharmaceutical group Sanofi-Aventis, also developing a bird flu vaccine, claimed the Hungarian prototype "did not meet standards" of the European Medicines Agency and would only be valid in Hungary.

In 1993, Hungary signed a contract with Omnivest to manufacture vaccines in large quantities.

The Hungarian prototype has been in development since late September, based on a strain of the H5N1 virus which appeared in Hong Kong in 1997 and which the World Health Organisation found in a human in southeast Asia at the start of 2005.

Hungary, which joined the European Union in May 2004 has a long tradition of medical achievements. In 2004, exports of pharmaceutical products increased by 39 percent compared to 2003, according to official figures.

AFP

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Thousands of birds struck down by bird flu in southern Russia

15/03/2006

ROSTOV-ON-DON, March 15 - 20,000 birds died of bird flu in the last 24 hours in Krasnodar Territory in southern Russia, the regional emergencies center said Wednesday.

"In the last 24 hours, 19,799 chickens have died in Krasnodar Territory, bringing the total number of dead birds to 328,376," the press service said.

A further 5,690 birds were culled in the Russian Caucasus republic of Daghestan to localize an outbreak of the lethal virus.

The Emergency Situations Center in the south said that since March 13, when vaccination of birds against the virus started, some 300,000 birds have been inoculated in Krasnodar Territory, along with 465,000 in Daghestan and 21,500 in the Caucasus republic of Kabardino-Balkariya. 30,000 birds have been vaccinated in the republic of Kalmykia in southern European Russia since March 14, and 300,000 in Stavropol Territory since March 11.

Russia's southern regions are particularly at risk from bird flu, as they are a major stopover for migrating birds. This year's spring hunt in the south of the country will likely be cancelled as part of efforts to restrict the spread of the lethal virus.

No human deaths from bird flu have so far been reported in the country.

(RIA Novosti, Sergei Rudkovsky)

Denmark finds bird flu

15/03/2006 14:05



Copenhagen - Denmark has found its first case of the highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu virus in a wild fowl, said officials on Wednesday.

The ministry for family and consumer affairs, which was in charge of food safety, said it would give further details at a news conference.

It said: "At the news conference the authorities will inform about the measures taken as a result of the bird flu."

It was still unclear if the case was the deadly H5N1 strain. So far H5N1 had never been found in Denmark.

Sweden reports first bird flu case

Denmark, a major poultry producer with an output worth \$483.5m a year, had been on guard against bird flu since the disease was found on the German Baltic island of Ruegen, near Denmark's southern coast in mid-February.

Denmark had since examined more than 100 dead wild birds for avian flu. Neighbouring Sweden reported its first bird flu case on February 28.

Jan Pedersen, general manger of the Danish Poultry Meat Association, said: "We have been expecting this and are prepared.

"We have further tightened our rules to make sure that the virus is kept out of our poultry sheds."

The H5N1 virus usually kills poultry within 48 hours and could infect people who came into close contract with sick birds.

Reuters

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Azeri dog dies of bird flu

Wed Mar 15, 2006 9:02 AM ET



BAKU (Reuters) - A dog has died of bird flu in Azerbaijan, a country where the virus is believed to have caused the death of three young women, officials said on Wednesday.

"A dead stray dog has been found, and after analysis type A bird flu was discovered. The medical investigation is continuing," said a statement from the state commission tasked with fighting the spread of bird flu. It said the dog died on March 9 in the capital Baku.

Reuters

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