



## Bird Flu News 15 – 21 June 2006

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### T-shirt mask could help in flu pandemic – experts

15 June 2006

WASHINGTON, June 14 (Reuters) - The world may be unprepared for a bird flu pandemic, but U.S. researchers said on Wednesday they had come up with one low-tech answer to widespread shortages of medical equipment -- a mask made out of a T-shirt.

Their mask fit comfortably over the face and appeared to filter out potentially infectious particles, the team at the University of Pittsburgh said.

"A simple, locally made, washable mask may be a solution if commercial masks are not available," Virginia Dato, David Hostler and Michael Hahn wrote in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

Experts say a pandemic of some kind of influenza is inevitable and that the H5N1 avian flu virus looks closer than any other virus to causing such a global wave of disease.

The H5N1 virus almost exclusively infects birds but it has killed 128 people and has infected at least 225.

The World Health Organization says there is a global shortage of medical equipment such as masks, gloves and gowns as well as of antiviral drugs and other supplies, especially in poor countries.

One key piece of protection is an N95 respirator -- a fitted, woven cone of paper that can be pressed tightly over the nose and mouth to filter out fine particles that can carry germs or toxins.

Dato's team tried to replicate these factors.

A cotton T-shirt "was boiled for 10 minutes and air-dried to maximize shrinkage and sterilize the material in a manner available in developing countries," they wrote.

They cut it into nine pieces and fashioned a mask that had several layers of cotton over the nose and mouth and tied behind the head.

Such a mask is a poor defense against influenza, except perhaps when used by trained health care workers, Dato said in a telephone interview.



"If it's really needed, you actually have the mask on and you are next to somebody who has influenza, then that mask is catching influenza droplets. So then when you are done with it, it is really contaminated," she said.

"It has to be appropriately washed, cleaned maybe with some bleach. It is somewhat like a dirty diaper (but) at least a dirty diaper that has poop in it, you can see that it is contaminated and you don't put it in your pocketbook."

It would be dangerous to put such a mask on a person sick with influenza, because they are already struggling to breathe and the mask could make it worse.

Another danger is "being overconfident -- putting on a mask and thinking you are invincible," added Dato.

Source: Reuters

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## Distinctive seasonal patterns of bird flu still unclear, WHO official says

June 17, 2006

It remains unclear whether there are truly distinctive seasonal patterns to outbreaks of the bird flu in poultry, said an official with the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday.

"We do know that the bird flu virus can survive for a time in colder weather, but it's really not clear at this point whether the virus is changing in such a way that it can survive in warm weather for a longer period than it was previously able to," said Roy Wadia, spokesman of the WHO office in China.

Hong Kong's health chief, York Chow, said on Friday that the latest human case of bird flu on the Chinese mainland might indicate the virus has mutated and become as infectious in summer months as it is in cooler months.

"Much more research needs to be carried out on this," Wadia said.

Virus changes all the time and these changes could make the virus more transmittable between poultry, from poultry to humans, and from humans to humans, he told Xinhua in an interview.

"This is why it is so important that agricultural authorities everywhere -- including the Ministry of Agriculture of China -- share virus isolates from animal outbreaks with the international scientific community," he said.

Genetic sequences of H5N1 virus samples have been shared by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture which is helpful, but isolates of virus are key to understanding how the virus is changing on the Chinese mainland, said Wadia.

A 31-year-old man in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong Province, was confirmed on Thursday to have contracted bird flu, bringing the country's total human infections of the disease to 19.

He showed symptoms of fever and pneumonia on June 3 and is in critical condition, said the Ministry of Health in a report.

Epidemiological research found Jiang had been to a local market where live poultry are sold, several times before developing the symptoms. The Hong Kong government on Thursday decided to stop poultry imports from the Chinese mainland and Macao announced on Wednesday it would halt the import of live poultry from Shenzhen.



"We are concerned if the virus has changed to become infectious all year round or even more virulent in winter," Hong Kong's Health, Food and Welfare Secretary, York Chow, told the media on Friday.

Source: Xinhua

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## Canada quarantines second poultry flock for bird flu

Sun, Jun 18, 2006

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (Reuters) - Canada is investigating a second backyard poultry flock for bird flu, although all birds remain healthy, authorities said on Sunday.

"A quarantine has been instituted at that premise and it's because there's been contact either with live birds or through foot traffic and potential contamination with the original infected farm," said Canadian Food Inspection Agency veterinarian Jim Clark.

The CFIA announced on Friday it had detected a case of H5 avian flu in a gosling from a backyard poultry flock after four goslings died, in the eastern province of Prince Edward Island.

Test results are expected on Tuesday, to confirm if the virus is a North American or Asian strain. If there is enough virus present, the CFIA will be able to determine whether it is a high or low pathogen strain.

"There's no direct evidence that the influenza virus was the cause of the problem in the four birds that died," Clark added.

All birds on the second farm, adjacent to the original farm, remain healthy and the CFIA has taken some swab samples to determine if the virus exists on that farm.

The noncommercial flock of 35 to 40 ducks, geese and chickens on the original farm were euthanized by the CFIA on Friday.

Source: By Marcy Nicholson

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## International Red Cross to train Myanmar on bird flu

June 19, 2006

The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Society will start training Myanmar people across the country later this month on bird flu prevention undertakings, a local weekly reported Monday.

Funded by the IFRC, the training will be aimed at raising Myanmar people's alert against any probable revival of the avian influenza at any time although the outbreak of the disease has been claimed under control, said the Voice, quoting the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS).

In cooperation with the MRCS, the training will be carried out from states and divisions to rural areas according to a decision adopted at a special meeting held recently which also involved the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Myanmar experienced two-month-long bird flu outbreak in March- April this year and was claimed to have been successfully contained and restriction of movement in the 13 bird-flu-affected townships of the two divisions have been lifted with no new such case being found since April 7 as also claimed by the Food and Agriculture Organization Yangon office.



Meanwhile, the UNICEF will also lead in a 1.8-million-US-dollar joint media project with Myanmar government and non-governmental media on prevention and education against bird flu among the public, earlier reports said.

Myanmar reported for the first time on March 13 the outbreak of H5N1 bird flu in two divisions of Mandalay and Sagaing as some 112 chickens died of the disease on March 8 in a poultry farm in Pyigyidagun township in Mandalay.

During the period, altogether 9,206 fowls from 408 poultry farms and 5,606 quails from 137 quail farms were culled and 330,000 fowls and 320,000 quails destroyed. Besides, about 100,000 eggs about 80,000 quail eggs were also destroyed.

Source: Xinhua

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## Japan Lifts Import Ban On Most French Poultry

6/19/2006

NEW YORK (Dow Jones)--Japan lifted its ban on French poultry imports Monday, including meat and internal organs, which had been in place since late February over bird flu, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry officials said, Kyodo News reported.

With the termination of the embargo, poultry products, including foie gras, can be brought into Japan from France, a major producer of geese and duck livers, the officials said, according to Kyodo.

Japan decided to terminate the embargo as necessary procedures, including disinfection of plants where avian flu has occurred, were completed and as the farm ministry confirmed no new cases of the disease at the plants for 90 days afterward, they said, Kyodo reported.

But the import ban on poultry from Landes, France, will remain in place as an avian flu vaccine banned in Japan was used there, according to the officials, Kyodo reported.

In 2005, Japan imported 1,510 tons of duck and other poultry meat and 377 tons of internal organs, including foie gras, from France, according to the ministry.

Before the ban, about 50% of Japan's foie gras imports came from France, according to Kyodo.

Source: CattleNetwork.com

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## New cases of bird flu suspected South Hungary

21 Jun 2006

A total of 580 geese will be culled at a farm in Kűlsogalambos in Bács-KiskunCounty in southern Hungary in the wake of suspected bird flu, the chief veterinary officer. The owner of the farm reported irregular behaviour of his geese to the local vet, Miklós Sűth said, adding that authorities had ordered a one-kilometre quarantine zone around the farm, where all other poultry would have to be culled. He said further cases could be expected in the region, where the virus was still taking its toll. On Monday the culling of 14,000 ducks was ordered in nearby Csolyospálos because of suspected bird flu infection. The vet found those birds to be suffering from a nervous system disorder that could have been caused by the H5N1 virus.

Nearly 12000 birds – geese and ducks - are awaiting to be culled in the area of Kiskunmajsa, at over thirty farmers. Some of the slaughterhouses cannot take over the poultry as their culling would mean payup and



a lot of extra work. The CEO of the Hungerit Poultry Processing Plant Zrt. Said that they work continuously, but can only takeover poultry from the region to which they were contracted previously.

Source: bbj.hu

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### Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A/(H5N1) Reported to WHO

20 June 2006

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	8	5
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	6	6
China	0	0	0	0	8	5	11	7	19	12
Djibouti	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Egypt	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	6	14	6
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	17	11	34	28	51	39
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	84	54	228	130

Total number of cases includes number of deaths.  
WHO reports only laboratory-confirmed cases.

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