



Bird Flu News 16 – 20 May 2006

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UN lauds Cairo for quick response to bird flu

May 16 2006 at 12:10AM

Washington - Egypt's quick response to bird flu shows that even less-developed countries can cope with limited outbreaks if they follow guidelines, the United Nations' chief bird flu expert says.

Although health experts had worried that Egypt could be hit hard by avian influenza because of its backyard flocks and widespread poverty, the North African country coped well with its outbreak, Dr David Nabarro said.

"They have been an example of good practice in the way they moved to introduce active surveillance. They got the human case mortality very low," Nabarro told Reuters in a telephone interview.

The H5N1 avian influenza virus has spread to more than 40 countries. It mainly infects birds but has sickened 208 people and killed 115 of them.

Egypt has had 13 cases and five of those people have died.

On Monday, Egyptian Health Minister Hatem el-Gabali said the epidemic in birds was nearly controlled.

"The situation as of this morning is that the disease has been wiped out to a level of 96 to 97 percent," Gabali told parliament, without elaborating.

Nabarro said Egypt followed World Health Organisation guidelines that call for countries to address bird flu at the highest political level, to begin intense surveillance to catch as many cases as possible, to cull flocks as soon as outbreaks

are reported, to compensate farmers who lose birds this way and to quickly treat human victims.

"Countries around the world - not just Egypt but Vietnam, Thailand, Ukraine and others - they are all making very sincere efforts to follow the strategies that were recommended (by the World Health Organisation)," Nabarro said.



"They have good political leadership and good surveillance schemes and they are paying attention to the livelihoods of people that lose their birds."

By Maggie Fox, Reuters

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EU countries urged to appoint bird flu "czars"

Tue May 16, 2006 5:00 PM BST

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - EU governments should each appoint a "bird flu czar" to make sure they could cope with a flu pandemic and put preparations on a par with countries like the United States, a top EU official said on Tuesday.

If the European Union was to deal effectively with a major flu outbreak, it would also have to look harder at immediate practical measures to be taken in each of the bloc's 25 countries, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Part of the problem was that E U's decision-making was too complicated because so many countries were involved in planning.

"The basic problem is that they (United States) now have one plan and we have 25," the official said.

"Belgium has one of these czars and he has the authority to make decisions on the spot: difficult decisions which could save lives, if acted upon quickly," he added. The Belgian role is filled by a health expert rather than a government minister.

The United Nations last year appointed Dr. David Nabarro to head its worldwide drive to contain bird flu.

Since 2003, bird flu has caused the deaths of at least 115 people worldwide. Experts fear that with every case, the lethal H5N1 avian influenza virus might mutate and spark a global flu pandemic capable of killing millions.

In terms of getting ready to cope with a flu pandemic, the EU was "still learning", he said, adding that the U.S. experience of recent disasters such as Hurricane Katrina had also helped them to become better prepared.

By Darren Ennis, Reuters UK

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WHO confirms six bird flu cases in Indonesia

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

JAKARTA (Reuters) - The World Health Organization confirmed six more human cases of bird flu infections in Indonesia on Wednesday, including five members of a family whose case has triggered fears of human-to-human transmission.

"There are six confirmations. One from Surabaya and five from Medan. One from Medan is still alive," said Sari Setiogi, the WHO's Indonesia spokeswoman.

Separately, Indonesia's health ministry said a 12-year-old boy died of bird flu four days ago in Jakarta's eastern suburb of Bekasi, according to local tests.

Blood samples have been sent to a WHO-affiliated laboratory in Hong Kong for confirmation, ministry spokeswoman Lily Sulistyowati said. Local tests are not considered definitive.



An outbreak of H5N1 bird flu involving about seven members of a family at Medan in North Sumatra province has worried health agencies around the world but a Health Ministry official said on Wednesday it was not a case of human-to-human transmission.

"The spread was through risk factors from poultry or other animals. There is no proof of human to human," Nyoman Kandun, director-general of disease control, told Reuters.

"The world is watching us. We are not being hasty," he added.

Four of the five family members have died. An eighth member of the family previously reported by the WHO to be part of the cluster of infections merely had a fever and is now not believed to have had bird flu.

By Achmad Sukarsono and Diyan Jari, Reuters UK

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Mass Cull As Bird Flu Found In City Market

17 May 2006

Ivory Coast began wholesale slaughter of poultry last week after three cases of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu was found in the economic capital's markets. Poultry at the Marcory and Treichville markets were slaughtered and incinerated, and cages were disinfected. No chickens were to be sold at the markets for 10 days. Similar culls also took place in Abidjan.

The Ivorian government confirmed several outbreaks in wild birds and poultry in Abidjan of the H5N1 virus, which has caused more than 100 human deaths, mainly in Asia, since late 2003.

The World Organisation for Animal Health announced in Paris last week that two outbreaks of bird flu had occurred in Abidjan, making Ivory Coast the seventh country in Africa to report the disease.

The Ivory Coast government adopted a number of measures to try to stop the spread of bird flu, but has not ordered the slaughter of all chickens raised in Abidjan nor ordered them be kept inside.

The first African country to report bird flu was Nigeria, on February 8.

Since then, the list has been joined by Egypt, where four people have been killed, as well as Niger, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Ivory Coast.

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Egypt reports new human bird flu case

May 18, 2006

Egyptian health authorities announced a new human bird flu case in a central Egyptian governorate, the official MENA news agency reported on Wednesday.

Health Ministry spokesman Abdel-Rahman Shahin was quoted as saying that a 75-year-old woman from the governorate of Minya, some 220 km south of Cairo, contracted the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu virus due to direct contact with backyard poultry.

The woman was hospitalized on May 12 and has been treated with anti-viral Tamiflu drug, said the spokesman.

It was the 14th human case since the outbreak of the deadly disease in Egypt in March, he said.

Out of the 13 cases reported before the new case, five have died and the other eight have recovered.



Egypt reported its first human bird flu case on March 18 after the country found its first outbreak in poultry on Feb. 17.

The Egyptian government has since taken tough measures to curb the spread of the fatal disease, which has killed over 100 people worldwide since its latest outbreak in southeast Asia in late 2003.

Most victims were infected after close contact with sick birds.

The virus currently can only jump from birds to humans, but scientists fear that it could mutate into a form capable of passing easily among humans and thus spark a global pandemic.

Source: Xinhua

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Danish domestic poultry test positive H5 bird flu

18 May 2006 13:49:09 GMT



Source: Reuters

COPENHAGEN, May 18 (Reuters) - Poultry on a smallholding farm on the Danish island of Funen has tested positive for the H5 strain of avian flu, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration said on Thursday.

The birds have been culled and police have cordoned off an area of 3 km around the farm, the administration said in a statement.

This is Denmark's first case of H5 bird flu in domestic birds, however the deadly H5N1 strain has already been found in several wild birds.

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How Did Seven Family Members Get Infected With Bird Flu?

19 May 2006

We still don't know how seven members of the same family in Indonesia became infected with the H5N1 bird flu virus strain. Six of them have died. It is vital to know whether some of them infected each other. If they did, this would mean that the virus might be changing.

The World Health Organization says that it is highly unlikely that H5N1 has mutated in this case. If it had, WHO believes more people from outside the family would have become infected.

The problem is that many days have passed and no one has managed to find any other source. If they had become infected by sick chickens or ducks, surely they would have been traced by now.

Henry Niman, Ph.D., President of Recombinomics, is calling for the release of the human H5N1 bird flu sequences from the dead family members which are held in the WHO database. He said the bimodal distribution of infection, starting with the index case who became ill on April 27, to family members in early May, indicates the possibility of human-to-human transmission. It is vital to know whether/how the H5N1 genome has changed.

Scientists fear that when the H5N1 bird flu virus strain mutates, it will gain the ability to transmit from human to human. At the moment it cannot do that easily. If it does manage to mutate in this way, we



could be facing a serious flu pandemic. Nobody knows what the mutated virus will be like - it could be extremely lethal or relatively harmless.

Nowhere in the world so far, except in this case in Indonesia, have so many people of the same family become infected within a few days of each other.

Indonesia's neighbours are increasingly nervous at its inability to stop the bird flu spread. New cases of sick chickens have been reported in the eastern Papua province - which has alarmed Australia.

Over 200 million chickens live in people's backyards in Indonesia. This makes it especially hard to contain the bird flu spread and to really know how many sick chickens there are.

Indonesian authorities seem unable to cope with the task of implementing measures to control avian flu at the district level. Different regions of the country are doing what they can with very little supervision from central authorities.

WHO has urged Indonesian authorities to do more to raise public awareness.

Written by: Christian Nordqvist, Editor: Medical News Today

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Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza

19 May 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	10	7	18	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	24	21	41	32
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	61	37	217	123

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

Source: WHO

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Deadly bird flu spreads in Burkina Faso

20 May 2006 11:58:55 GMT

OUAGADOUGOU, May 20 (Reuters) - Burkina Faso is preparing to cull more poultry after the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of bird flu first detected near the capital last month spread to two more towns, the government said late on Friday.



The disease had been confirmed in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second city some 360 km (220 miles) west of the capital Ouagadougou, and in Sabou, around 100 km west of the capital, the government said. A new outbreak had also been found in Ouagadougou itself.

The impoverished West African nation first confirmed in early April that it had found the virus in poultry at a motel on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. It has since isolated the area and culled birds within a 3 km (2-mile) radius.

"The original site has been disinfected. But the measures will be stepped up and the same ones will be taken at the new sites," Animal Resources Minister Tiemoko Konate told reporters.

He said the new cases -- found in traditional artisanal rather than modern farms -- had been confirmed on Friday after tests carried out by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) at its laboratory in Weybridge, England.

Neighbouring Ivory Coast became the sixth African country to be hit by H5N1 this month. The virus has killed more than 100 people round the world since 2003.

World Health Organisation officials fear human cases have gone undetected in West Africa due to poor health services. So far the region has no confirmed human infections, though in another part of the continent five Egyptians have died from the virus.

Konate said tests had been carried out on the staff working at the motel in Burkina Faso where the virus was first found but said that no human cases had been discovered.

Source: Reuters

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