

## Bird Flu News 17-19 Feb 2006

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### Avian influenza – situation in Iraq - Update 3

*17 February 2006*

The Ministry of Health in Iraq has confirmed the country's second case of human infection with the H5N1 avian influenza virus. The case, which was fatal, occurred in a 39-year-old man from the northern province of Sulaimaniyah. He developed symptoms on 18 January and died on 27 January. He was the uncle of the country's initial case, a 15-year-old girl who died 17 January, and provided care for her during her illness. He also had a documented history of exposure to infected domestic birds.

Problems with the shipment of patient specimens for external diagnostic confirmation have been solved. Samples from an initial 15 patients under investigation for possible infection were tested today at a US Naval Medical Research Unit located in Cairo, Egypt. Apart from the 39-year-old fatal case, all test results were negative.

A second shipment of samples from additional patients under investigation arrived yesterday in Cairo. Results are expected within the next few days.

Duplicate samples are being sent to a WHO collaborating laboratory in the United Kingdom for further testing and analysis.

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### Bird Flu Found for First Time in Country, Egypt Says (Update1)

*2006-02-17 12:17 (New York)*

*By Maher Chmaytelli*

Feb. 17 (Bloomberg) -- Bird flu has been found for the first time in Egypt, the government said today.

Seven infections of avian influenza have been found in poultry in the provinces of Cairo, the capital; its southern suburb, Giza; and Minya, to the south, the government said in a statement published by the official news service MENA, after an emergency meeting in Cairo to discuss the outbreak.

No human cases were reported, it said. The seven infections were detected after tests performed on more than 37,000 birds that were suspected to have the disease, the government said.

“The special operations room to monitor the avian influenza disease received yesterday evening the first positive test of samples infected with the H5N1 virus,” the government said. “All birds located in the area where the infections happened were killed and buried in accordance with international guidelines.”

A total of 91 of the 169 people known to have been infected with the H5N1 strain since late 2003 have died, mainly in Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization.

The seven infections were found on birds that lived with families, four of them in Cairo, two in Giza and two in Minya, the government said. “They were not bred in industrial farms.”

The people who were in contact with the infected birds in Egypt tested negative for the virus, said the government statement which published hotline phone numbers for the population to report any suspected case.

The Egyptian information ministry gave instructions to the media to intensify programs to raise the awareness about the disease, said MENA.

--Editor: Hallam (bcr)

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## Iraq Reports New Bird-Flu Death; Virus Reaches France (Update1)

2006-02-18 00:05 (New York)

By Jason Gale

Feb. 18 (Bloomberg) -- Iraq reported a second bird-flu fatality, pushing the monthly global death tally to a two-year high as the spread of the lethal virus widened in Europe and the Middle East, with outbreaks in birds in France and Egypt.

An Iraqi man from the northern province of Sulaimaniyah tested positive for the H5N1 avian influenza virus, the World Health Organization said yesterday, citing information from Iraq's health ministry. The 39-year-old, who developed symptoms on Jan. 18 and died 10 days later, is the uncle of the country's initial case, a 15-year-old girl who died Jan. 17, the WHO said.

New outbreaks in birds are being reported daily across Europe, the Middle East and western Asia, creating more opportunity for human infection and increasing the risk of the virus changing into a pandemic form. The latest death in Iraq brings to 10 the number of fatalities confirmed this month, the highest since February 2004, when 14 deaths were reported.

“We don't know, but it might only take a very limited number of mutations for it to eventually be transmissible efficiently from human to human,” potentially triggering a pandemic, Professor Albert Osterhaus, head of the department of virology at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, said in a phone interview yesterday.

A total of 91 of the 169 people known to have been infected with the H5N1 strain since late 2003 have died, mainly in Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization Web site, last updated on Feb. 13.

### ***Infected Poultry***

Most of the people who have contracted the virus handled infected poultry or came in contact with their excrement. Cooking meat and eggs properly kills the virus, according to the Geneva-based WHO.

In Hong Kong, where H5N1 first sickened people in 1997, agriculture authorities are undertaking more tests on a magpie found dead in Kowloon's urban Sham Shui Po area suspected of having the virus, the local government said yesterday.

In Indonesia, whose seven fatalities in 2006 give it the highest death tally this year, a 40-year-old woman is being treated for symptoms of avian flu at the Sulianti Saroso Hospital. She is the second suspected patient to be admitted in three days, Ilham Patu, a senior doctor at the Jakarta hospital, said in an interview yesterday.

### ***Outbreaks***

Avian flu has swept across the European Union the past 10 days, with outbreaks identified in Germany, Greece, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia, as well as in Turkey, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan. Egypt is the second country in Africa, after Nigeria, to report infected birds.

There is growing concern that the H5N1 virus may spread to other countries in West Africa, after the discovery of the virus in Nigeria earlier this month. Niger directly borders the affected areas of Nigeria and has more than 2 million people vulnerable to acute hunger, the Rome-based UN Food & Agriculture Organization said in an e-mailed statement yesterday.

"If a poultry epidemic should develop beyond the boundaries of Nigeria the effects would be disastrous for the livelihoods and the food security of millions of people," said Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer, who is currently in Nigeria.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo set up a crisis management center in the presidential villa to receive, coordinate and disseminate information regarding the control of avian flu, the government said in a Feb. 17 statement on its Web site. United Nations agencies, including WHO and the Food & Agriculture Organization, and donor agencies of the U.S. and EU will also assist, the statement said.

### ***Ordered to Work***

Nigeria's Information Minister Frank Nweke Jr. ordered all veterinarians on vacation back to work immediately to join in the management of the crisis, it said. The UK donated 15,000 units of protective kits to Nigeria to assist efforts to cull and dispose of infected birds, the Nigerian government said in a separate statement yesterday.

A wild duck that was found dead in Ain, a department of central-eastern France, tested positive for the bird-flu virus, the French Agriculture Ministry said yesterday. Initial tests showed bird had an H5 avian-flu subtype.

### ***Egypt***

The virus was found for the first time in Egypt, the government said yesterday. Seven infections were found in poultry in the provinces of Cairo, the capital; its southern suburb, Giza; and Minya, to the south, the government said in a statement published by the official news service MENA, after an emergency meeting in Cairo to discuss the outbreak.

An outbreak of H5N1 in migratory birds probably began in Azerbaijan on Jan. 29 in three coastal locations near the city of Baku on the Caspian Sea, Ismayil Murshud Gasanov, the country's head of veterinary services, said in a Feb. 15 report to the World Organization for Animal Health.

The World Health Organization said samples from additional patients under investigation in Iraq are being tested in Cairo and results are expected within the next few days. Duplicate samples were being sent to a WHO collaborating laboratory in the United Kingdom for further testing and analysis, the United Nations agency said in a statement yesterday on its Web site.

--With reporting by Karima Anjani in Jakarta, Maher Chmaytelli in Cairo, Gabriele Parussini in Paris, and Brian Parkin in

Berlin. Editor: Millard

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## India's First Cases of Bird Flu Found in Maharashtra Chickens

2006-02-18 09:25 (New York)

By Ashok Bhattacharjee

Feb. 18 (Bloomberg) -- The first cases of avian influenza in India have been detected in chickens in the western state of Maharashtra, Anees Ahmed, the state's animal husbandry minister, said in a phone interview.

As many as 52 poultry farms are affected in the Nandurbar district in the northern part of the state, Ahmed said, without detailing how many birds had died. The minister said the birds were infected with the H5N1 virus strain.

"When the entire region is affected, how can we say how many birds are hit?" Ahmed said. "We are taking no chances and we will cull all the birds in all the farms."

Chickens in the region as well as in the neighboring state of Gujarat will be culled, he said, asking people to avoid eating the fowl.

--Editor: Mohideen.

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## Bird Flu Infections in Germany Rise to 41, Deutsche Presse Says

2006-02-18 10:04 (New York)

By Kenneth Wong

Feb. 18 (Bloomberg) -- A further 28 cases of avian influenza were reported in Germany's northern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Deutsche Presse Agentur reported, citing Till Backhaus, the state's farm minister.

The wild birds infected with the H5N1 strain of bird flu were spread throughout the Baltic Sea island of Ruegen, the German newswire reported. The infections brought the total reported on the island to 41, DPA said.

--Editor: Sims.

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## Bird Flu Spreads to India; Iraq Reports Second Death (Update1)

2006-02-18 13:59 (New York)

By Jason Gale and Jennifer M. Freedman

Feb. 18 (Bloomberg) -- Bird flu spread to India, affecting dozens of poultry farms in the western part of the country, while Iraq reported a second human fatality from avian influenza, pushing the monthly global death tally to a two-year high.

The lethal H5N1 strain was found in chickens at as many as 52 farms in the Nandurbar district of Maharashtra, Anees Ahmed, the state's animal husbandry minister, said by telephone today. All

poultry at the farms will be slaughtered, he said. While no people are known to have been infected, several are being kept under observation, India's Health Secretary P.K. Hota said.

The outbreak in India, the world's second most-populous nation with 1.1 billion people, comes a day after the World Health Organization said a 39-year-old Iraqi man who died on Jan. 28 had tested positive for bird flu. The man was the uncle of Iraq's first bird flu case, a 15-year-old girl who died Jan. 17.

New outbreaks in birds are being reported daily across Europe, the Middle East and Asia, creating more opportunity for human infection and increasing the risk the virus will mutate into a pandemic form. The latest death in Iraq and another reported today in Indonesia bring to 11 the number of human fatalities confirmed this month, the highest since February 2004, when 14 deaths were reported.

### ***Mutations***

"It might only take a very limited number of mutations for it to eventually be transmissible efficiently from human to human," potentially triggering a pandemic, Albert Osterhaus, head of the Department of Virology at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, said yesterday. His laboratory was the first to identify human infection from the H5N1 strain.

A total of 91 of the 169 people known to have been infected with the H5N1 strain since late 2003 have died, mainly in Southeast Asia, according to the WHO's Web site, last updated on Feb. 13. Most of the people who have contracted the virus handled infected poultry or came in contact with their excrement. Cooking meat and eggs properly kills the virus, according to the Geneva-based organization.

In Hong Kong, where H5N1 first sickened people in 1997, agriculture authorities are undertaking more tests on a magpie found dead in Mong Kok suspected of having the virus, the local government said in a statement today. A magpie found dead in Kowloon's urban Sham Shui Po area yesterday tested positive for H5N1 today, the statement said.

### ***Indonesian Outbreaks***

In Indonesia, whose eight fatalities in 2006 give it the highest death tally this year, a 40-year-old woman is being treated for symptoms of bird flu at the Sulianti Saroso Hospital. She's the second suspected patient to be admitted in three days, Ilham Patu, a doctor at the Jakarta hospital, said yesterday.

Tests by the WHO confirmed that a 23-year-old man who died last week had contracted the virus, Hariadi Wibisono, director of vector-borne disease control at Indonesia's health ministry said by telephone today. That's the country's 19th H5N1 fatality.

Iran said 153 wild swans found dead at the Caspian Sea coast have tested positive for the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain, the first cases of the virus to be confirmed in the Islamic republic.

Avian flu has swept across the European Union in the past 10 days, with outbreaks identified in Germany, Greece, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia, as well as in Turkey, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan. Egypt is the second country in Africa, after Nigeria, to report infected birds.

### ***Contaminated Feed?***

The virus may be spreading through contaminated feed, Munich-based ornithologist Josef Reichholf said, according to Focus magazine. The feed may have originated from the Humboldt Current off the west coast of South America and the Benguela Current off southwest African coast, where many migratory seabirds live, Focus cited Reichholf saying.

There is growing concern that the H5N1 virus may spread to other countries in West Africa, after the discovery of the virus in Nigeria earlier this month. Niger borders the affected areas of Nigeria and has more than 2 million people vulnerable to acute hunger, the Rome-based UN Food & Agriculture Organization said in a statement yesterday.

“If a poultry epidemic should develop beyond the boundaries of Nigeria, the effects would be disastrous for the livelihoods and the food security of millions of people,” said Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer, who is now in Nigeria.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has set up a crisis management center in the presidential villa to receive, coordinate and disseminate information regarding the control of bird flu. UN agencies including the WHO and FAO, and aid agencies of the U.S. and EU will also assist, the government said.

### ***Under Control***

Officials in Nigeria today said the crisis is slowly coming under control, 11 days after Africa's first outbreak of the H5N1 strain, Agence France-Presse reported, citing the country's chief veterinary officer, Junaido Maina.

A wild duck found dead in Ain in central-eastern France, tested positive for an H5 avian-flu subtype, the French agriculture ministry said yesterday. France doesn't plan to destroy birds because the virus hasn't spread to poultry farms, Agriculture Minister Dominique Buisson told journalists today.

H5N1 was identified for the first time in Vienna, four days after Austria reported its first case, AFP reported today. The lethal strain of avian influenza killed a swan in Vienna's northern suburb of Floridsdorf, AFP said, citing an unidentified municipal spokesman.

Governments including Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Greece, Sweden, Austria and Norway have begun enforcing an order to keep all fowl indoors to halt the spread of the disease.

### ***Egypt***

The virus was found for the first time in Egypt, the government said yesterday. Seven infections were found in poultry in the provinces of Cairo, its southern suburb, Giza, and Minya, to the south, the government said in a statement published by the official news service MENA.

An outbreak of H5N1 in migratory birds probably began in Azerbaijan on Jan. 29 in three coastal locations near the city of Baku on the Caspian Sea, Ismayil Murshud Gasanov, the country's head of veterinary services, said in a Feb. 15 report to the World Organization for Animal Health.

WHO said samples from additional patients under investigation in Iraq are being tested in Cairo and results are expected within the next few days. Duplicate samples were being sent to a WHO collaborating laboratory in the U.K. for further testing and analysis, the United Nations agency said yesterday.

*-- With reporting by Chen Shiyin in Singapore, Ashok Bhattacharjee and Mrinalini Datta in New Delhi, Adria Cimino in Paris, Simon Casey in London, Kenneth Wong in Berlin and Matthias Wabl in Vienna.*

*Editor: Schumacher.*

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## **India to Cull 700,000 Chickens on Detecting Bird Flu (Update1)**

*2006-02-18 23:44 (New York)*

*By Mrinalini Datta and Ashok Bhattacharjee*

Feb. 19 (Bloomberg) -- India will cull about 700,000 chickens in the western part of the country to prevent the spread of avian influenza after the first cases of the viral outbreak were reported in poultry yesterday.

The deadly H5N1 virus was detected in chickens in the western state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai, the country's commercial hub, is the capital. The virus has affected as many as 52 poultry farms at Nawapur, in Nandurbar district in the northern part of the state.

"We have called a meeting of poultry farmers" in the area, Anees Ahmed, Maharashtra's health minister, said today in an interview. The culling "is the first step" toward tackling the outbreak, he said.

New outbreaks of the H5N1 virus in birds are being reported daily across Europe, the Middle East and Asia, creating more opportunity for human infection and increasing the risk of the virus changing into a pandemic.

The risk of the disease moving from poultry to humans would make vulnerable the 1.1 billion people of India, the world's second-most-populous nation. India said it's taking all possible precautions to check the spread.

The Maharashtra state administration has created 60 teams to cull fowl in 19 villages, Pradeep Deshpande, the superintendent of police in Nandurbar, said in a telephone interview. The police have cordoned off the villages and identified 48 chicken farms where the birds will be culled.

### ***Compensation***

"We do not anticipate resistance to the culling as the chicken farmers know it is a major outbreak," Deshpande said. "Compensation will have to be given and the administration is working on it."

The state government has created special wards in hospitals around the affected region to treat people who may be infected by the virus, Deshpande said. No case has been referred to the hospitals.

Nearly 200 million domestic poultry have died or been culled since the first reports of the H5N1 virus outbreaks in Asia at the end of 2003, the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations said in a statement on Feb. 17. The economic loss to affected Asian countries is estimated at around \$10 billion.

The Indian government said yesterday it was taking all precautions, including putting the affected area under quarantine and keeping people in contact with the birds under observation. People in affected areas are being advised to avoid eating chicken and maintain "proper hygiene and sanitation".

Nandurbar district had 3.1 million poultry according to a 2003 census, the animal husbandry department said on its Web site.

--Editor: Chacko

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## **India reports first bird flu case in chickens**

*19.02.2006 (Afp, Mumbai)*

Indian state government officials yesterday said that a laboratory had confirmed the country's first outbreak of the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus in chickens. "Fifty-thousand birds have died. We have sent

dead birds to the highest level laboratory in (the city of) Bhopal," said Anees Ahmed, minister for animal husbandry for western Maharashtra state.

"They have confirmed H5N1 bird flu" in chickens, he told AFP. Ahmed said the outbreak was at a chicken farm containing 200,000 birds at Nandurbar near the border with Gujarat state. India has just under 500 million heads of poultry, according to the most recent livestock census.

"We have sent in the report (on the birds) to the government," in New Delhi, H.K. Pradhan, director of the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory in Bhopal, told AFP. He said federal government officials were meeting in New Delhi to discuss the report.

There was no immediate comment available from government officials. The Bhopal laboratory is one of just 10 high security disease facilities in the world and the only one in Asia. With migratory birds from affected countries such as China passing through the subcontinent in the winter, Indian officials have become increasingly concerned about the possibility of infection.

*Source: The Daily Star*

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## Bird Flu Infections in Germany Rise to 41, Deutsche Presse Says

*2006-02-18 10:04 (New York)*

*By Kenneth Wong*

Feb. 18 (Bloomberg) -- A further 28 cases of avian influenza were reported in Germany's northern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Deutsche Presse Agentur reported, citing Till Backhaus, the state's farm minister.

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*For the news agency's Web site, click on <http://www.dpa.de>*

*--Editor: Sims.*

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