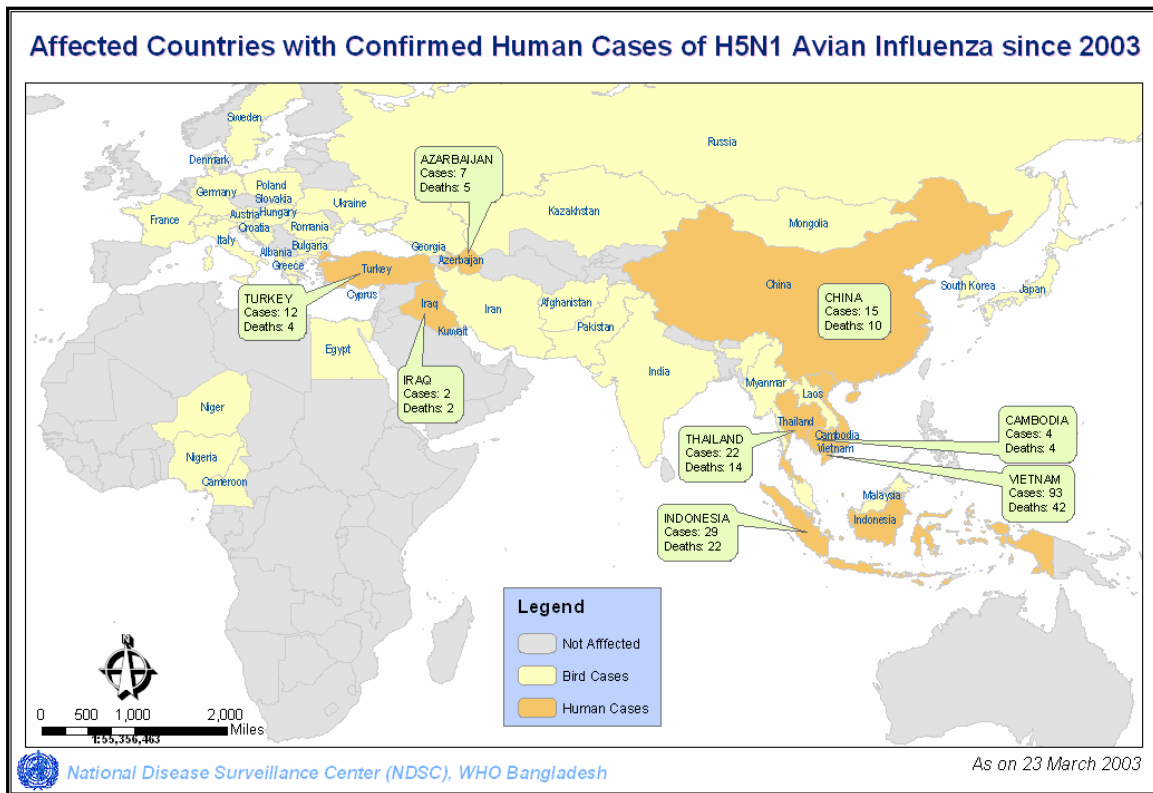


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Distribution of Bird Flu Cases

23 March 2006



Source: WHO & FAO

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Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A/(H5N1)

21 March 2006

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	7	5
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	12	11	29	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	40	27	184	103

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

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5 deaths in Azerbaijan push global bird flu toll to 103

Last Updated Tue, 22 Mar 2006 18:08:39 EST



A veterinarian collects dead birds on the Caspian Sea shore in February. The deadly H5N1 bird-flu strain was confirmed in the carcasses. (AP Photo/Shakh Aivazov)

A British lab has determined that H5N1 strain of bird flu killed five people in Azerbaijan within the past month, pushing the worldwide human toll from the virus to more than 100.

Two other Azerbaijanis became ill from exposure to the virus but recovered, according to tests done at the World Health Organization collaborating lab. The results were released Tuesday.

Those who died were all teenagers or young adults, and a WHO news release said four of them were linked:

The four lived near each other in the settlement of Daikyand, in the southeastern part of the former Soviet republic.

- A 17-year-old girl who died on Feb. 23.
- Her female cousin, 20, who died on March 3.
- The 16-year-old brother of the cousin, who died on March 10.
- A close family friend, a 17-year-old girl, who died on March 8.

The fifth victim was a 21-year-old woman who died on March 9 in the western administrative district of Tarter, according to the WHO release.

The source of their infection is still under investigation, but the World Health Organization noted that young girls and women in the affected communities are responsible for removing feathers from fowl.



"Over the weekend, a field investigation in Salyan [region], jointly conducted by WHO and the Azeri Ministry of Health, found some evidence that carcasses of numerous swans, dead for some weeks but not buried, may have been collected by residents as a source of feathers," the news release said.

Previously, 98 people in seven countries were confirmed to have died after contracting the H5N1 virus, mostly from infected domestic poultry. The new toll is 103.

Scientists fear the virus will mutate into a form that is more easily passed from person to person, perhaps as a result of combining with a human influenza virus.

If that happens, they warn that millions could die around the world.

CBC News

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Bird flu reaches Jordan Valley

(03.23.06, 09:08)



Tests conducted by Agriculture Ministry confirm chicken carcasses discovered Wednesday in Moshav Bekaot in the Jordan Valley are of birds that died from bird flu; Olmert instructs authorities to offer PA assistance in preventing outbreak of virus there
Meital Yasur Beit-Or

Chicken carcasses discovered Wednesday in Moshav Bekaot in the Jordan Valley were of birds that died from bird flu, tests conducted by the Agriculture Ministry confirmed.

On Wednesday a closure was placed on the area, and this morning, chickens in the moshav will be culled.

The tests were conducted after the regional veterinary office received reports Wednesday of dead chickens in a farm of about 20,000 birds.

Meanwhile it was reported that fowl found dead in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday were infected with bird flu. In addition, blood samples of dead birds found in Rafah have been sent for testing.

Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has instructed authorities to offer the Palestinian Authority assistance in preventing the outbreak of the virus there and its spreading into Israel, the Prime Minister's Office said.

Agriculture Ministry Director-General Yossi Yishai has authorized the purchase equipment to help the PA deal with the virus. The equipment will be transferred to the Palestinians via the Erez crossing. Later on Thursday Israeli and Palestinian officials are expected to discuss the issue further.

The PA will apparently seek the advice of European Union experts to fight the virus. The EU has earmarked 10 million euros to assist Mediterranean basin countries in combating the disease, and the PA is expected to receive additional funds in the coming days.

Bird flu may have reached Palestinian poultry

LAST UPDATE: 3/22/2006 8:08:35 PM

JERUSALEM (AP) - Israeli officials say it looks like bird flu has spread to the Palestinian territories for the first time.

Tests on dead chickens found in the Gaza Strip indicate the birds were infected by the deadly H5N1 strain.

Israel says the findings won't be conclusive for at least 48 hours, but the Agriculture Ministry is asking Palestinians to treat the results as definitive.

Palestinians also say they found some dead chickens on a private farm in Gaza, but it's not clear whether the officials are talking about two different cases.

Israeli and Palestinian officials says are meeting to discuss how to stop the deadly flu that reached Israel last week. Israel says the farm will be isolated and the owners tested to make sure humans haven't been infected.

Associated Press

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Madhya Pradesh declared free of bird flu

March 23, 2006

Madhya Pradesh has been declared bird flu-free, though Burhanpur and Boregaon, where birds died in droves, have been sealed. According to official sources, birds in these areas have not died of avian influenza – as earlier reports suggested.

However, as a precautionary measure sale of chicken in these areas has been banned.

As a result poultry farmers and traders, who were already grappling with abysmal demand, are reeling under the ban. Sources say the industry is in no position to sustain fresh losses, in addition to the Rs 5,000 crore lost by poultry farmers after outbreak in Navapur was reported in neighbouring Maharashtra last month.

However, the Indore poultry industry has brushed aside apprehensions of fresh losses as players feel there would be no further effect on their business and they are hopeful that countries like Japan and others would lift the ban on exports as Sri Lanka has already done this and there are chances now that the industry will get back to normal.

“In Jalgaon, poultry owners are individuals who breed some birds in their backyard. So there was little impact,” said Inderbir Singh Nayar, Chairman of National Egg -Coordination Committee (NECC), Indore Chapter and General Secretary of the Indore Poultry Federation.

He added that, however, the hype created by the media could affect the industry already reeling under losses. “The disease stuck mostly backyard poultry farms and only one commercial farm with 3,000 chickens was affected.”

NECC and Bromark organised a Chicken Mela in the city on the eve of Holi, where food lovers were served all kinds of chicken dishes free of charge. The organisers maintained that chicken if properly cooked is not harmful.

Nayyar said there are 160 poultry farms in Indore, which consumes 5 lakhs eggs everyday, of which these farms supply about 4 lakh eggs. On the other hand, the daily consumption of chicken in the city is about 4 – 5 lakh tonne.

The industry turnover is about Rs 1.20 crore from eggs and Rs 1.5 crore from chicken per month.

“Since the demand has fallen by 70 per cent, we have incurred huge losses. Before February 18, the price of chicken was Rs 48 a kilo and now it has slumped to Rs 30 a bird. The price per egg before the outbreak was Rs 1.20 which has now come down to 70 paise,” Nayyar said.

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Cell barrier slows bird flu's spread among humans

March 22, 2006

Although more than 100 people have been infected with the H5N1 avian influenza virus, mostly from close contact with infected poultry, the fact that the virus does not spread easily from its pioneering human hosts to other humans has been a biomedical puzzle.

Now, a study of cells in the human respiratory tract reveals a simple anatomical difference in the cells of the system that makes it difficult for the virus to jump from human to human.

The finding, reported today (March 22) in the journal *Nature*, is important because it demonstrates a requisite characteristic for the virus to equip itself to easily infect humans, the key development required for the virus to assume pandemic proportions.

by Terry Devitt

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