

Bird Flu News 27-29 March 2006

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Suicides follow the bird flu

Monday, March 27, 2006 at 0000 hours IST

HYDERABAD, MARCH 26: Having reeled under the bird flu fear, poultry industry across the country is now facing a suicide spree.

Due to a reported loss of over Rs 4,000 crore across the country, small farmers are scared due to low prices. The industry is badly hit with prices going down to as low as 50 paise per egg and Rs 5 for one kg of chicken from an all-time high of Rs 1.80 and Rs 65 respectively. Apparently, domestic prices are hurting the small farmers and forcing some of them to even commit suicide.



According to K Narayana Reddy, president, Andhra Pradesh Poultry Federation, three farmers - one each from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal had committed suicide in the recent weeks. It has also been reported that over 10 farmers in the country have committed suicide since the bird flu scare broke out. Blaming the insensitive attitude of the Centre, Mr Reddy said, farmers are committing suicide due to mounting losses and inability to feed the birds due to very low egg prices over 35 days.”

KVS Subba Raju, zonal chairman, National Egg Coordination Committee, said when there is no single case of human to human transmission of Avian Influenza anywhere in the world and not even a single case of human blood sample testing positive for bird flu anywhere in the country, the Central government officials are unnecessarily terrorising the public with their statements on spread of bird

flu to human beings.

“The loss incurred by the poultry sector is Rs 200 crore per day and the mounting losses is leading to desperation and farmers committing suicides,” said KG Anand, general manager, Venkateshwara Hatcheries.

By Mahalakshmi

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Egypt reports new suspected human bird flu case

2006-03-27 06:35:23

CAIRO, March 26 (Xinhuanet) -- Egyptian Health Minister Hatem el-Gabali announced on Sunday that a new suspected case of human bird flu had been found in the country's Nile delta region, the Egyptian official MENA news agency reported.

Shaimaa Khairi el-Desoqi was being treated in a local hospital in the governorate of Kafr el-Sheikh, some 125 km north of Cairo. The 18-year-old girl, who had come into contact with dead birds, started to show bird flu symptoms on Thursday, including high temperature, sore throat and muscle ache, according to the report. Members of her family are currently being tested for the avian influenza virus.

The latest case brought to five the total number of suspected human bird flu cases in the populous north African country. Egypt confirmed on March 18 that a woman who had been raising chickens at home died of H5N1 bird flu virus, the first human case of the lethal disease in the country.

The other patients either have recovered or are still under treatment in hospitals.

Egypt reported first case of the H5N1 strain of bird flu in dead poultry on Feb. 17 and the government has since taken tough measures to curb the spread of the disease.

The deadly H5N1 strain has killed over 100 people worldwide since its outbreak in southeast Asia in late 2003, according to the World Health Organization.

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 human flu pandemic which might kill millions. Enditem

Editor: Luan Shanglin

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Bird flu paranoia: Peshawar scared stiff by dead birds

Monday, March 27, 2006

PESHAWAR: Residents of the provincial capital and the areas adjacent to it, have been scared by reports of bird flu after hundreds of crows and kites (cheel) have mysteriously died in the area in the three days following confirmation of bird flu in two NWFP districts.

Reports of dead crows and kites, confirmed by locals and livestock disease investigation officials, had been coming in from Shahi Bagh, Charsadda Road, Gulf Course Avenue, University Camp and Palosai.



The medical community also expressed apprehensions about the birds' deaths. Prof Dr Farmanullah of the Agriculture University, Peshawar confirmed the deaths of four crows in his house. Similarly, Dr Munir of Peshawar University also confirmed death of crows inside and outside his house. "I was not very scared by the deaths of the crows in my house, but it was the number dead birds I saw outside my house that unsettled me," he said, adding that the unusual and sudden deaths of these birds could well be attributed to the deadly bird flu virus. Reports of unusual bird deaths have also been confirmed in the Bajaur Agency, where several domesticated chickens and wild birds have died since bird flu was confirmed in Charsadda and Abbottabad.

Dr Shir Mohammad, disease investigation officer at the NWFP Veterinary Research Institute, Peshawar, has also confirmed unusual deaths of crows and kites. “After receiving these reports, I dispatched my team to these areas to collect blood samples from the dead birds immediately,” he said.

He said that the team collected blood samples from the birds, which were sent to the National Veterinary Research Laboratory in Islamabad, for testing.

However, he said that these birds usually died at this time of year. But this year, he said, the deaths of these birds had proved more alarming, since the presence of the bird flu virus had been confirmed in nearby Charsadda district. “We cannot be sure until we receive the blood test results,” he concluded.

By Akhtar Amin

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First Czech case of bird flu reported

Mar 27, 2006, 15:45 GMT



Prague - Officials reported Monday the first case of H5 bird flu in the Czech Republic, a country that previously appeared to be an unusual pocket of resistance to the disease spreading across Europe.

Czech State Veterinary Administration (SVU) Director Milan Malena said a wild swan found dead in the south-central part of the country tested positive for the disease last week.

The bird is now being tested at a British laboratory for the deadly H5N1 strain which can spread to humans. This test should be completed Wednesday, said agriculture ministry spokesman Tomas Loskot.

Agriculture Minister Jan Mladek said if the second test is positive, extraordinary restrictions will be imposed for poultry farmers and breeders within a 10-mile radius of the site where the swan was discovered.

However Mladek, who has been trying for weeks to settle consumer fears over chicken meat, said he remained hopeful that the test would be negative.

The bird was found along the Vltava River near Hluboka nad Vltavou, 110 kilometres south of Prague and 50 kilometres north of the Czech-Austrian border.

Austria reported its first cases of avian flu in two swans six weeks ago. Other cases in recent months have been reported in the Czech Republic's other neighbours - Germany, Poland and Slovakia.

Officials with the Czech State Veterinary Administration (SVU) have tested nearly 1,400 birds since last fall.

As in other European Union countries, the Czech government has imposed strict rules on poultry farms, breeders and bird importers in hopes of preventing bird flu from spreading beyond wild birds.

In recent weeks Czech farmers have reported sharp drops in consumer demand and market prices for chicken and other poultry due to what experts say are unfounded fears that bird flu spreads in meat.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

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Sweden finds mink infected with bird flu virus

27 Mar 2006 15:30:43 GMT

STOCKHOLM, March 27 (Reuters) - Swedish veterinarians have found a mink with an aggressive form of the H5 bird flu virus and had the mammal put down, the National Veterinary Institute said on Monday.

The animal was found in the Blekinge region of south Sweden, an area where several bird flu cases have been found. What is initially described as an aggressive form of H5 bird flu is often later confirmed as the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus.



The mink probably got the disease from eating wild birds which were already infected, the Institute said in a statement.

The H5N1 bird flu virus can infect humans who come into contact with infected poultry and has killed more than 100 people since late 2003.

The virus has also recently been detected in a marten, a weasel-like mammal, and cats in Germany, and a dog in Azerbaijan.

The World Health Organisation says that so far only domestic poultry are known to have played a role in transmitting the virus from animals to humans, but it has called for further investigation into the significance of infection in other mammals.

Source: Reuters

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Cambodian PM pushes for more bird flu news

March 28, 2006

PHNOM PENH (Reuters) - Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen kicked off an urgent public information campaign about bird flu on Tuesday after a 3-year-old girl who came into contact with infected chickens died of the virus.

"The bird flu virus has been spreading. We must take quick action to prevent it," Hun Sen said during a visit to a medical centre in the capital, Phnom Penh.

Underscoring the need for better health education in one of Asia's poorest nations, he blamed last week's death of the 3-year-old in the central province of Kampong Speu on a lack of public understanding about the H5N1 virus and its dangers.

"The parents took dead chickens and cooked them for their children to eat. This was due to the lack of information on bird flu," he said, before urging more coverage of bird flu on state and private television channels.

Since the girl's death, state broadcaster TVK has been alone in carrying daily slots about bird flu. Health experts say eating well-cooked poultry is safe, but people should not handle birds that die unexpectedly.

Since it first surfaced in Southeast Asia in late 2003, five Cambodians have died of H5N1, which scientists fear could mutate into a highly contagious flu that spreads easily from person to person, triggering a pandemic that could kill millions.

According to the World Health Organisation, 186 people worldwide are known to have been infected with H5N1 since 2003. Of those, 105 have died.

Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/BKK154265.htm>

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Bird flu scare hits Bhojpur district, India

Tuesday, March 28, 2006 01:52:09 am

Fear of bird flu has gripped Bhojpur district following reports that more than 1,500 chickens were found dead on Sunday at separate poultry farms at villages under Koelwar and Jagdishpur blocks of the district.

However, the district administration officials have not yet ascertained the reason behind the large number of casualties of chickens.

"Anything could be said only after laboratory tests and scientific investigation," said civil surgeon S K Mahto here on Monday. He said separate teams of AHD officials have been rushed to the affected poultry farms to investigate the real cause behind the birds' deaths and also to ensure precautionary measures being taken by the farm-owners.

"The district administration is watching the situation and the ADH officials have been asked to report soon so that steps, if needed, could be taken to cull the virus-infected chickens.

According to sources, one of the first ever report of the chickens' sudden death came from village Dhandiha under Koelwar block where over 1,000 chickens died of the "mysterious disease" on Sunday.

Sunil Singh, TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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Ma'aleh Hahamisha (Israel) culling begins

Mar. 29, 2006 8:24 | Updated Mar. 29, 2006 13:31

Veterinary services have begun culling poultry at Kibbutz Ma'aleh Hahamisha after the deadly bird flu virus was discovered in their coops on the previous day.

By the end of the operation, 300,000 birds were to be killed on the Jerusalem-area kibbutz.

The discovery came just two days after Agriculture Minister Ze'ev Boim lavished the health services with praises on how quickly they took control over the potentially dangerous outbreak.

On Sunday, Boim noted that Israel took action more quickly than other countries in the world faced with a flu outbreak.

Briefing the cabinet on how Israel combated the flu, he said that in nine days some 1.2 million poultry from 53 chicken farms in 14 different communities were destroyed and buried.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

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