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Technical Avian Influenza Task Force  
FAO - Rome

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**FAOAIDE**news  
Avian Influenza Disease Emergency

## **Update on the Avian Influenza situation (As of 27/01/2004) – Issue no. 1**

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### **Introduction**

A Technical Task Force has been set up at FAO Headquarters to follow up the situation and give technical support within the Organisation in all matters related to the current Avian Influenza emergency in Asia and facilitate communication between the relevant organisations such as WHO and OIE.

The Technical Task force is led by the Animal Health Service (AGAH), with the participation of the Policy Branch (AGAL: GIS data, policy matters, economics), Technical Cooperation Department (TCE and TCO providing guidance into country and regional technical cooperation project support), and GIIM (press releases/media contacts).

An update ("AIDE news") will be distributed internally on a regular basis.

### **1. Summary of the situation**

- As of today and according to different media reports, HPAI has been reported in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia.
- Vietnam, Japan and Thailand have officially reported HPAI to the OIE in domestic poultry. A migrating wild bird was also found positive to HPAI (H5N1) in Hong-Kong SAR and officially declared to OIE.
- Low pathogenic strain of avian influenza virus was identified in Tapei China (H5N2).
- In Pakistan, Avian Influenza (Type H7 and H9) was reported. Some 5 millions birds are estimated to have died since end of November. Slaughter of infected flocks is advocated but locally produced formalin vaccine is also being produced.
- In South Korea, a report mentioned that the bird flu virus discovered was different from the one that killed six people in Vietnam. CDC (US) said that the H5N1 strain had a different genetic sequence and therefore is believed to come from a different source. The human bird flu cases were reported in South Korea (less pathogenic strain for humans?).

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- There are ongoing rumours of HPAI in China.
- There are some concerns in Bangladesh where 14 children have died after possible contacts with poultry. The symptoms included high fever, headache, tendency to vomit, diarrhea and loss of consciousness. "Dr Jahangir Hossain of the International Center for Diarrhea Diseases Research did not rule out the possibility of contraction from local poultry or other farm animals, but ruled out malaria, meningitis or encephalitis." Samples were sent to CDC.

## 2. Countries affected (as of 27/01/2004)

country	date reported	source*	type	Humans	comments
Vietnam	8/01/04	OIE	H5 (N1)	yes	
Thailand	23/01/04	OIE	H5 (N1)	yes	
Cambodia	23/01/04	gphin**	H5	no?	
Indonesia	25/01/04	gphin	H5N1	suspected	chicken have been dying since november
Japan	12/01/04	OIE	H5	no	
Taiwan province of China	20/01/04	OIE	H5N2	no	low pathogenic
Hong Kong, SAR	26/01/04	OIE	H5N1	no	wild birds
Lao PDR	26/01/04	gphin	NT	no	
China	26/01/04	gphin	NT	no	Guangxi province (200 ducks dead in the township of Dingdong)
Pakistan	26/01/04	gphin	H7 & H9	no	

\* Official (OIE) and non official Information (Promed, press agencies...)

\*\* Gphin stands for Global Public Health Intelligence Network

NT: not tested

## 3. Actions taken – follow-up

- Telephone Conference planned on Thursday 4 p.m (Italian time frame) in FAO, Rome; related to the preparation of the Expert consultation
- Expert consultation (control strategies) – planned on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February
- TCP projects in the pipeline:

country	status
Vietnam	draft project received – reviewed AGAH
Lao PDR	request received – no project document (Carolyn's mission)
Regional	in preparation

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- Missions planned:

Carolyn Benigno, FAO RAP Animal Health Officer, Bangkok, will travel to Lao PDR on 29/01/2004

Gleeson, Consultant in epidemiologist - region

#### 4. Other issues

- Trade (source: meat mailing list / Nancy Morgan, AGAL)

Some facts about Thailand:

- The 4th largest poultry exporter, after the US, Brazil, and the EU. Approximately 40 percent it's estimated production of 1.5 million tonnes is exported. These exports of over 500,000 tonnes are valued at approximately US\$1 billion.
- The largest markets for Thai poultry exports (which mainly consist of uncooked processed chicken products and boneless skinless breast meat) are Japan and the EU (50 percent and 35 percent respectively of total exports).
- Thailand supplies approximately 25 percent of EU imports of poultry meat from third countries (estimated at 172,000 tonnes in 2002 out of total EU imports of 700,000 tonnes). The largest EU importers of Thai chicken meat are the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands. Thailand supplied approximately 16, 10, and 19 percent of their respective imports (including intra-trade).
- Chicken prices are down slightly this year in the EU. While a ban on Thai chicken will leave a deficit in the market for white meat going into processing, it is likely that the Brazilians, a competitive producer of similar type of product, will move to supply the gap.
- In the Japanese market, domestic poultry supplies are dropping as AI infected flocks are disposed of and imports are banned from Thailand (Thailand accounts for thirty percent of Japanese poultry imports). Meanwhile, a ban on US and Canadian beef due to BSE will push prices of all meats higher.

#### 5. Resources available

##### Relevant articles/publications:

- The use of vaccination as an option for the control of Avian Influenza (I. Capua, S Marango) – 71<sup>st</sup> OIE General Session (May 2003).
- Advice to international travellers (source WHO Web site):  
[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004\\_01\\_26/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_26/en/)

WHO does not at present recommend any restrictions on travel to any country currently experiencing outbreaks of H5N1 avian infection in poultry flocks, including countries which have also reported cases in human. At this time, WHO recommends that travellers

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to areas experiencing outbreaks of this disease in poultry should avoid contact with live animal markets and poultry farms. Large amounts of the virus are known to be excreted in the droppings from infected birds.

Since mid-December, outbreaks of H5N1 infection have been detected in the poultry populations of the Republic of Korea, Japan, Viet Nam, Thailand and Cambodia. Additional countries have detected deaths in poultry flocks, and the cause is currently under investigation. The outbreak in Japan was limited to a single farm in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The outbreak was reported on 12 January, and no further spread to other farms has been detected. All 34,600 chickens at the infected farm had either died or been destroyed by 20 January. Some human cases and deaths caused by the same H5N1 virus strain have been reported in two of these countries, Viet Nam and Thailand. Most of these cases have been linked to direct contact with diseased birds. At present, WHO has no information that the disease is spreading from person to person. Influenza viruses are destroyed by heat. As a precaution, consumers should ensure that all foods from poultry, including eggs, have been thoroughly cooked.

### **Relevant Web sites:**

FAO/AGA Web site:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/home.html>

OIE web site:

[http://www.oie.int/fr/fr\\_index.htm](http://www.oie.int/fr/fr_index.htm)

WHO web site:

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/)

### **Relevant links:**

Avian Influenza fact sheet:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/avian.html>

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