



Royal Thai Embassy, Press Release

Bird Flu Epidemic Situation in Thailand

Due to the recent outbreak of the Avian Flu or Bird Flu Epidemic in some Far East Countries, The Thai authorities concerned wish to clarify and update the epidemic situation in Thailand as of 26 January 2004 as follows;

1. Current Situation of Avian Flu in Thailand

1.1 On 23 January 2004, Thailand has acknowledged presence of Avian Flu virus strain (H5N1). Since then, Thailand has maintained high state of vigilance.

1.2 It was confirmed that, among 3 confirmed cases of Avian Flu, a 6-year old child who reportedly contracted the H5N1 virus, died on 25 January 2004. There are reportedly another 10 patients suspected with the H5N1 virus. Thailand's health authority is closely monitoring the situation.

2. Control & Preventive Measures

2.1 The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, will regularly conduct nation-wide epidemiological investigation for the source of Avian Flu infection instead of zone by zone screening approach. If the virus is discovered, strict OIE's standard procedure will put in place in that affected area immediately, including the imposition of pre-emptive culling from the infected farm in an area within a radius of 5 kms. Movement control and surveillance in an area of within a radius of 60 kms from the infected farm will be enforced. Furthermore, the movement and production of poultry in the area within radius of 50 kms from the infected farm will be prohibited.

2.2 In light of the extend of the problem and the constraint faced in term of equipment, the Ministry of Agriculture will cooperate with other agencies as well as private sectors to provide assistance in terms of materials, equipment and manpower in investigation process as well as eradication of the disease.

3. Conduct Public Awareness of the Avian Flu

It was reiterated that there has been no evidence of transmission of Avian Flu from human-to-human nor bird-to-human (except chicken). It was further reiterated that there is no evidence the virus could be transmitted through the consumption of well-cooked (at 60 degree Celsius) chicken or egg. At present, transmission of the H5N1 virus could only be transmitted through direct contact with the infected chicken's

fluid, secretion and droppings. It is advised that the poultry farmers who are in close contact with chickens and eggs and posed as a risk group are to take strict precautionary measures.

4. Imposition of Stringent Measures

As a precautionary measures to contain the spread of H5N1 virus, the Government has imposed stringent legal measures for those who failed to comply with the laws in disposal of the infected poultry.

5. Restoring International Confidence

In order to restore international confidence and to exert our concerted efforts and determination in our fight against the Avian Flu outbreak, the Thai Government will convene a Ministerial Meeting on the Current Poultry Disease Situation amongst the health and agriculture ministers to come up with most suitable modalities for cooperation and coordination on Avian Flu at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 January 2004. The countries affected with the disease and main importers of poultry products such as Cambodia, PRC, Laos, South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Japan, EU, the United States of America and two economics namely Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as representatives from WHO, FAO, OIE and other specialists were also invited as resource persons so as to seek ways and means to address this problem.

Issued on 27 January 2004.

**Royal Thai Embassy,
Verecke ut.79, 1025 Budapest
Hungary Tel. (361) 438-4020
Fax: (361) - 438-4023
E-mail: thaiemba@mail.datanet.hu**