

Generic Guidelines relating to Avian Influenza

Personal Care:-

1. Wear rubber gloves and protective clothing that can be disinfected or disposed of and protective eyewear or a face shield while handling animals.
2. Wash hands with soap and water often and disinfect works surfaces and equipment between sites.
3. Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.
4. Minimize exposure to mucosal membranes by wearing protective eyewear (goggles)
5. The influenza virus is sensitive to many common disinfectants such as detergents, 10% household bleach, alcohol and other commercial disinfectants. The virus is much more difficult to inactivate if it is encrusted in organic material such as feces or soil.
6. Take an influenza antiviral drug daily for the entire time you are in direct contact with infected birds or a contaminated environment.

Symptoms:-

Affected birds display symptoms such as Tremors, Diarrhoea, Head Tilt and Paralysis. The disease spreads quickly causing Paralysis and Staggering. The virus is transmitted between affected poultry and recently from poultry to wild birds and vice-a-versa.

Birds Care:

1. It should be ensured that wild birds are not harmed during trapping and collection of serum samples.
2. Preference should be given to the leg vein instead of the wing vein. Wing vein blood collection is reported to result in haemorrhage affecting normal flight, making them susceptible to predators.
3. All wild bird samples are valuable and hence all collection of samples, packing and transport should be done in collaboration with trained animal husbandry/veterinary staff. This is VERY IMPORTANT.
4. Awareness should be spread that any sighting of a dead bird by volunteers, bird watchers, etc. should be reported to the nearest forest/animal husbandry office.

Action Plan for Prevention, Control & Containment of Avian Influenza (Revised – 2015)

Introduction

Avian influenza (AI), as per World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), is defined as an infection of poultry caused by any influenza A virus of the H5 or H7 subtypes or by any influenza A virus with an intravenous pathogenicity index (IVPI) greater than 1.2 (or as an alternative at least 75% mortality) as described below. These viruses are divided into high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses and low pathogenicity avian influenza viruses:

- a. High pathogenicity avian influenza viruses have an IVPI in six-week-old chickens greater than 1.2 or, as an alternative, cause at least 75% mortality in four-to eight-week-old chickens infected intravenously. H5 and H7 viruses which do not have an IVPI of greater than 1.2 or cause less than 75% mortality in an intravenous lethality test should be sequenced to determine whether multiple basic amino acids are present at the cleavage site of the haemagglutinin molecule (HA0); if the amino acid motif is similar to that observed for other high pathogenicity avian influenza isolates, the isolate being tested should be considered as high pathogenicity avian influenza virus;
- b. Low pathogenicity avian influenza viruses are all influenza A viruses of H5 and H7 subtypes that are not high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses.

Avian Influenza (AI) viruses have been circulating worldwide for centuries with four known outbreaks recorded in the last century. The present wave of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) emerged in Hong Kong in 1997. India notified the first outbreak of avian influenza on 18th February, 2006. Since then, outbreaks have been reported in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Sikkim, Odisha, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Chandigarh.

In view of a threat of global outbreak of AI and apprehensions of a human pandemic, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries (DADF), Government of India had prepared an action plan in 2005 which was revised in 2006 and lately in 2012 for guidance of State Government for prevention, control and containment of Avian Influenza in the Country. The action plan further been updated based on the further experience gained and lessons learnt from the past occurrences and the contemporary scientific information.

The Action Plan is comprised of four chapters. Chapter I, advises the states/ UTs on preparedness against AI outbreaks. Chapter II, indicates the actions to be taken if an outbreak of AI is suspected. Chapter III, describes the actions during an outbreak of the disease, and Chapter IV, identifies persons who will handle Avian Influenza (AI) infected poultry and advises on biosafety and biosecurity measures.