

Recommendation No. 2

**Highly pathogenic avian influenza
Challenges encountered and measures for preventing its spread**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. The global human population continues to grow and become wealthier, and the demand for animal protein, particularly for poultry meat and eggs, is correspondingly increasing;
2. Highly pathogenic influenza (HPAI) continues to have a significant impact on poultry health and production across the globe;
3. Many countries worldwide are experiencing or have experienced unprecedented HPAI events which threaten animal health, public health, food security, agricultural productivity, farming community livelihoods and global trade;
4. While geographical barriers may still help in preventing the spread of avian influenza, strains of the virus have now been shown to spread intercontinentally by wild waterfowl and other wild birds;
5. The understanding of how avian influenza viruses can spread within continents is critical to the development of successful strategies to reduce the impact of influenza outbreaks in commercial poultry;
6. The proximity to the aquatic wild bird flyways and the presence of wetlands as aggregation areas for aquatic birds, increases the risk of epidemiological contacts and introduction of avian influenza in domestic poultry, such as evidenced during the 2014/2015 outbreak of HPAI in the United States of America;
7. The implementation of effective biosecurity measures prevents and reduces the risk of introduction and subsequent spread and amplification of the avian influenza virus in domestic poultry;
8. Early detection of HPAI virus is key to rapid control and eradication of the virus;
9. During the 2014/2015 outbreak of HPAI in the United States of America, depopulation of commercial poultry premises and disposal of carcasses were the most demanding disease control response activities in terms of human resources;
10. The OIE has adopted numerous standards for the prevention, detection, and control of avian influenza, including those related to zoning and compartmentalization.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries conduct active wild bird surveillance to track and monitor avian influenza viruses in the wild bird population, in particular in aquatic wild birds, and the poultry producers be informed of meaningful results, on a timely manner, to strengthen their biosecurity;

2. Member Countries continue to provide detailed spatial and temporal information on avian influenza occurrence in both domestic poultry and wildlife through WAHIS;
 3. Member Countries develop contingency plans for disease control activities and ensure adequate material and sufficient human resources are available for HPAI disease control activities, notably for depopulation of commercial farms and disposal of carcasses;
 4. Member Countries assess and share lessons learned and best practices on the application of the relevant OIE standards in the management of HPAI outbreaks;
 5. Member Countries promote the implementation, by the poultry sector, of appropriate biosecurity measures in line with the *OIE Terrestrial Code's* Chapter 6.4 on “Biosecurity procedures in poultry production”, by the development of specific biosecurity plans jointly with the industry;
 6. Member Countries submit avian influenza samples to Reference Laboratories for sequencing and strain collation in support to the joint OIE and FAO worldwide scientific network for the control of animal influenza (OFFLU);
 7. The OIE encourage the identification of the multifactorial determinants of animal health risk needed to support risk analysis, surveillance and intervention strategies, including updated evaluations on the risk associated with migratory flyways and that the enhancement of this capacity be considered in the upgrade of WAHIS;
 8. The OIE undertake joint capacity building seminars dedicated to Wildlife, Animal Disease Notification, and Laboratory National Focal Points in order to favour synergy at national level in terms of notification of wildlife diseases such as avian influenza; and
 9. The Member Countries strongly consider the establishment of bilateral and multilateral agreement on the recognition of zones and compartments to facilitate trade during outbreaks implementing the principles defined in Chapter 4.3 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* on “zoning and compartmentalisation”.
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(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas on 18 November 2016 and endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 25 May 2017)