

Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene

**Epidemiology Report of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1
Outbreak in December 2008 in a Chicken Farm
in Ha Tsuen, New Territories**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the “Epidemiology Report of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 Outbreak in December 2008 in a Chicken Farm in Ha Tsuen, New Territories (the Report)” released on 5 March 2009.

Detection of avian influenza virus in a local farm in December 2008

2. On 9 December 2008, a local chicken farm located at Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long (the index farm) was declared as an infected place after dead chickens found in the farm were tested positive of avian influenza. A series of response actions were taken immediately to prevent the spread of virus including the culling operations in the index farm, another chicken farm located within three-kilometre radius of the index farm and Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Poultry Wholesale Market, suspension of local and imported live poultry including day-old chicks and pet birds supply for 21 days, thorough cleansing and disinfection in retail markets, etc. To understand the cause of outbreak and better prepare our farms against the risks of any possible avian influenza outbreak in future, the Administration set up two investigation groups responsible for conducting an epidemiological study of the avian flu outbreak on the index farm and a vaccine study respectively on 12 December 2008. The vaccine study is still underway and is expected to be completed by end 2009.

The Investigation Group on Epidemiological Study

3. The convenor of the Investigation Group on Epidemiological

Study was the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Inspection and Quarantine) and members included experts from the University of Hong Kong and representatives of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Department of Health and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

4. The Investigation Group has conducted an in-depth examination of the biosecurity measures of the index farm and attempted to identify the source of virus as well as the channel that the virus could have entered into the farm. The Investigation Group has also reviewed the biosecurity measures of the index farm and other local farms and recommended remedial and improvement measures so as to assist the farmers in enhancing their vigilance against avian influenza outbreak. The Investigation Group submitted the Report to the Secretary for Food and Health on 5 March 2009, which has also been uploaded onto the website of AFCD for public viewing on the same day. The full report, including an executive summary is at [Annex A](#).

Way forward

5. AFCD has taken on board the recommendations of the Report and will facilitate the implementation of the enhanced biosecurity measures in the index and other local farms.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
Food and Health Bureau
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