

Poultry HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Spring 2005

OIE Establishes New Chapter on AI

The 73rd Annual General Session of the International Committee of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), held in Paris from May 22 to 27, adopted a new chapter on avian influenza (AI) to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code. OIE's General Session notably brings together representatives appointed by the Governments of the 167 OIE Member Countries. Approximately 700 participants representing the Member Countries, intergovernmental organizations (FAO, WHO, World Bank, WTO etc.) and many non-

governmental organizations took part in the event. The Session was honored by the presence, alongside the President and the Director General, of high level political Authorities and numerous Ministers of Agriculture of OIE Member Countries.



The new chapter on avian influenza in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, was adopted so as to improve transparency and control methods of the disease, protection of human health and provide greater protection for countries importing poultry and poultry products while eliminating unjustified barriers to trade.

The chapter, 2.7.12 in the Terrestrial Code, helps to define standards for international trade, including definitions for poultry, notifiable avian influenza (NAI) free establishments. The code defines highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza (HPNAI) as "viruses that have an intravenous pathogenicity index (IVPI) in six-week-old chickens greater than 1.2, or cause at least 75 percent mortality in four- to eight-week old chickens infected intravenously." The code also states that "H5 and H7 viruses which do not have an IVPI of greater than 1.2 or cause less than 75 percent mortality in an intravenous lethality test should be

sequenced to determine whether multiple basic amino acids are present at cleavage site of haemagglutinin molecule; if the amino acid motif is similar to that observed for other HPNAI isolates, the isolate being tested should be considered as HPNAI." OIE defines low pathogenicity notifiable avian influenza as all influenza A viruses of H5 and H7 subtype that are not HPNAI viruses.

The standards apply to live poultry and other birds, hatching eggs, human consumption eggs, poultry semen, fresh meat of poultry, meat products of poultry, products of poultry intended for use in animal feeding or agricultural and industrial use, feathers and down, as well as meat and products from birds other than poultry.

The chapter also discusses consideration of NAI-free status for countries, zones or compartments. The three levels allow for risk assessment of potential factors with NAI and targeted surveillance in a country, zone or compartment to seek NAI (or HPNAI) free status. OIE also includes an appendix on Guidelines for the Surveillance of Avian Influenza. The appendix defines the principles and provides a guide for the surveillance of NAI in accordance with Terrestrial Code Appendix 3.8.1, which is applicable to countries seeking recognition for a declared NAI status, with or without use of a vaccination.

The unofficial standards can be found on the Internet at www.oie.int/eng/press/en_050602.htm. ●

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UEP Program Adopts New Molt Standards

The United Egg Producers' (UEP) Board of Directors has approved a recommendation from an independent Scientific Advisory Committee allowing only non-feed withdrawal molts.

"Recognizing that this is a major undertaking for the betterment of hens and our industry, our producers have until January 2006 to integrate this newly designed system for molting," said Gene Gregory, vice president of United Egg Producers. "As animal welfare

issues continue to be an important and growing concern for consumers, retailers can be assured that eggs carrying the Animal Care Certified seal are from farms following even higher standards for proper hen care."

The new molting guidelines are a giant leap forward for the egg industry and producers will need time to educate themselves on the new methods. After January 1, 2006, only molt programs that provide the hens with nutritionally adequate and palatable feed suitable for a non-producing hen will be allowed to use the Animal Care Certified seal on their packaging.

Additionally, all farms must still maintain 100 percent compliance

with the Animal Care Certified's strict housing, space, air, feed and water guidelines as well as submitting to annual independent audits from organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture.

Until recently the only known method to extend the life of a hen and rejuvenate its reproductive cycle was through the use of a feed withdrawal molt. Through UEP-funded research, new methods have been found to induce a successful molt that does not include feed withdrawal. An independent Scientific Advisory Committee of scientists and researchers have reviewed and endorsed these research findings. ●



Poultry Health Report

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Undersecretary Hawks, Undersecretary Jen Resign

In early June, Secretary Mike Johanns announced that Undersecretary Bill Hawks would be resigning his position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Regulatory Programs. The native Mississippi farmer has served in the position since 2001.

"Over the past four years, Bill has worked on some of USDA's most challenging issues to protect and promote U.S. agriculture in the areas of animal and plant disease at home and abroad, while also helping the Bush Administration's efforts to break down sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to U.S. exports," said Johanns. "Bill has agreed to continue to serve in the coming months as we identify a replacement and I thank him for his service and wish



Bill Hawks



Dr. Joseph Jen

him well in all his future endeavors."

Additionally, Dr. Joseph Jen resigned his position as Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics on May 26. Jen was appointed by then Secretary Ann Veneman to the position.

"Dr. Jen has been instrumental in the effort to increase recognition of the importance of agricultural science and technology," said Johanns. "His hard work and vision have led USDA to many great accomplishments in the areas of research and education. I appreciate that Dr. Jen has agreed to remain in his position until a successor is appointed and I certainly wish him all the best in his future endeavors." ●

USDA Offers Free Biosecurity for the Birds Video or DVD

Features Tips to Protect Birds against Disease Outbreak

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is offering a free 15-minute video on preventing exotic Newcastle disease (END) and Avian influenza (AI) for small flock poultry owners and bird fanciers.

The video, part of USDA's Biosecurity for the Birds campaign, is also available in DVD format. The video or DVD can be ordered by calling 301-734-7799 or by email at birdbiosecurity@aphis.usda.gov.

An outbreak of END in California and other western states in 2002 and 2003 resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of birds and cost taxpayers and bird owners hundreds of millions in eradication costs and lost poultry and jobs. Following the eradication of that outbreak, USDA created the Biosecurity for the Birds campaign to inform noncommercial poultry owners and bird fanciers about the signs of serious poultry diseases, to ask them to report sick birds and to give them information on practicing backyard biosecurity to keep their birds safe and healthy.

In addition to discussing how to recognize and report END and AI, the video includes tips to help bird owners prevent the spread of these and other avian diseases in the first place. These tips include:

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap, water and a disinfectant before entering an area where birds are kept.
2. Keep cages, food and water clean on a daily basis. Clean and disinfect equipment that comes in contact with birds or their drop-



pings, including feed scoops, shovels, rakes and brooms.

3. Clean and disinfect car and truck tires, poultry cages and equipment when traveling to a location where other birds are present.

4. When taking birds to a fair or exhibition, keep those birds separated from the rest of the flock and watch them for at least two weeks after the event to ensure that they didn't pick up a disease.

5. Keep new birds separate for at least 30 days before incorporating them into the flock.

6. Do not share birds, lawn and garden equipment, tools or poultry supplies with neighbors or other bird owners.

7. Call the local cooperative extension office, local veterinarian, the state veterinarian or USDA veterinary services office to report sick or dead birds. USDA operates a toll-free line, 866-536-7593, with veterinarians who can help.

For more information on how to recognize the signs of END and AI and additional steps that can be taken to protect birds, visit the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity. ●

ID/INFO EXPO 2005 Slated for September

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is announcing registration for ID/INFO EXPO 2005, scheduled for September 27-29 at the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel. Do not miss this opportunity to take part in this one-of-a-kind conference and trade show devoted to the implementation of a national animal identification system.

"We are expecting a great meeting for the latest information in animal identification and information systems," said Glenn Slack, NIAA President and CEO. "Our planning committee is working diligently in finalizing what looks to be an excellent program."

The program will feature:

- NAIS updates from across the country, including accomplishments, future plans and on pilot projects;
- Implementation challenges as well as a look at private industry proposals for expediting a national ID system;
- New technology in animal identification and information systems, and consideration of other sectors' needs from a coordinated national system; and
- Pre-conference seminar with NAIS Experts and a field perspective of practical technology experience.

NIAA is offering early registration discounts in addition to NIAA member discounts. Information, including registration, lodging and a preliminary schedule of events, is available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org and click on the ID/INFO EXPO 2005 logo, or by calling 270-782-9798. ●

NIAA Poultry Health Committee Focuses on AI, Infectious Diseases

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) Poultry Health Committee convened during the organization's annual meeting held in April in St. Paul, Minn. The committee session focused on global risks of poultry & other animal infectious diseases.

Dr. Thomas J. Myers, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services talked about "Avian Influenza – International Issues and the U.S. Surveillance and Control Program." Dr. Myers addressed a wide variety of issues affecting the U.S. poultry industry, including AI risk factors and transmission to humans; AI outbreaks, both domestic and foreign; Current bans on U.S. poultry trade; a preview of international standards changes; and domestic AI programs in the commercial and live bird market sectors.

Dr. Mo Salman, Animal Population Health Institute, Colorado State University, presented "Global Risks of Infectious Diseases." Dr. Salman presented findings from *Issue Paper 28* from the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST). *Issue Paper*

28 addresses four key issues:

- The threat of animal diseases;
- The impact on animals and humans at the international, national, industry, and societal levels;
- The responses;
- Specific information is provided on national and international monitoring, and surveillance programs.

Dr. Dale C. Lauer, Minnesota Board of Animal Health, presented "Avian Influenza, Avian Pneumovirus – The Minnesota Experience." His talk focused on the challenges in Minnesota with avian influenza, and their cooperative control program. Additionally, Dr. Lauer covered work done with control of avian pneumovirus (APV), and the development of the APV eradication project.

These presentations can be found on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/Proceedings/2005AMProceedings.asp.

The committee also brought



Dr. Mo Salman

forth one new position statement, "Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Programs." The statement reads: BACKGROUND: *Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI) programs currently under development address the issues associated with this disease in the integrated commercial poultry industry and the live bird marketing system.*

All segments of the poultry industry need to be engaged to maximize the effectiveness of any program developed. POSITION STATEMENT: *NIAA supports the development of risk-based surveillance for Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza across all segments of the poultry industry. Indemnity for all segments of the industry should be equitable.*

To be most effective NIAA encourages USDA/APHIS to work with local/state animal health officials to customize LPAI education and outreach initiatives.

For more information on the NIAA Poultry Health Committee, log on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/aboutNIAA/committees/Poultry/poultry_intropage.asp. ●

Models Predict Poultry Pathogen Behavior

Computer models that more accurately predict the growth of food pathogens are being developed by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and are available online. These models make better predictions about food safety because they gauge how pathogens are affected by competition from other food microbes.

ARS food technologist Thomas P. Oscar, at the ARS Poultry Food Safety Research Laboratory in

Princess Anne, Md., models the growth and survival of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* on chicken. The lab, based at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore campus, is affiliated with the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center (ERRC) in Wyndmoor, Pa.

Oscar's research is part of a growing field, known as predictive microbiology, that estimates the behavior of foodborne pathogens in response to environmental con-

ditions encountered in food production and processing operations. Previously, models were often developed by studying pathogens in broth with no other microbes present. Researchers thought this would allow them to accurately predict pathogen behavior in food. But this is not always the case because these models don't consider the role competing microorganisms have in real-life scenarios.

ARS researchers will produce

NIAA Symposium Challenges Animal Agriculture's Role for the Future

Attendees to the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) symposium, *Protecting the Global Food Supply: Growing Concerns for Emerging Zoonotic Diseases*, were left with a very key message: we must strengthen animal and human health together.

The symposium, held in conjunction with the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting in April, focused on the importance of animal agriculture's role in safeguarding international health, for domestic animals, wildlife and humans. The American Association of Avian Pathologists helped to sponsor this timely symposium.

"There is a need for linkages to veterinarians, medical doctors—all health sectors," said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy and associate director for the Department of Homeland Security's National Center for Food Protection and Defense at the University of Minnesota. "[Animal agriculture is] the traffic controller, at the interface for the future."

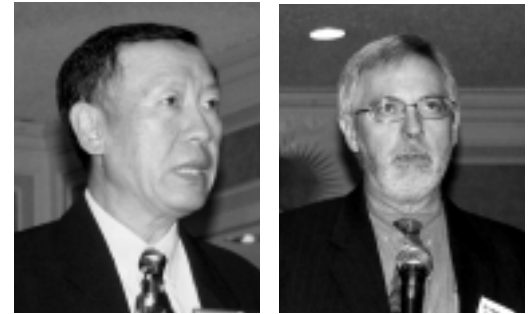
Osterholm provided insight into key diseases that have high

zoonotic, or transmissible to humans, implications such as influenza. Additionally, he challenged leaders to take a more aggressive role in diseases that have great social and economic implications.

"You still have to fight the uphill battle," said Osterholm, "providing a road for the future."

Other presentations throughout the day addressed key issues, such as the importance for international coordination, the increasing importance of the World Animal Health Organization (OIE), the need for more science-based standards worldwide, use of technologies for prevention and control of disease and the importance of communication throughout the world from technicians to the general public.

"Unless we build walls around our border, we rely on the national services of other countries," said Dr. Kevin Walker, director of the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Directorate at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. "It's in our best interest that we be strong."



Dr. Pratuang Sudsakorn (left), CPF Group, Thailand, presented Thailand's response to avian influenza. Dr. Michael Perdue (right), CDC Animal Influenza Liaison to the WHO, spoke on assessing avian influenza as a pandemic threat. Their presentations can be found on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org, under the "Proceedings" subhead.

The symposium, moderated by Dr. Will Hueston of the University of Minnesota, hosted a variety of speakers, including: Dr. Michael Perdue, CDC Animal Influenza Liaison to the World Health Organization; Dr. John Smith, chairman of the U.S. Animal Health Association Committee on Transmissible Diseases of Poultry and Other Avian Species; Dave Schmidt, International Food Information Council; Dr. Pratuang Sudsakorn, Animal Health and Technical Services for the CPF Group in Thailand; Dr. Jimmy Tickel, North Carolina Department of Agriculture; Dr. Alfonso Torres, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Brian Evans, Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Mike Robach, Cargill, Inc.; Dr. Susan Harlander, BT Safety, LLC; and a panel of key leaders in Minnesota involved with a collaborative effort to protect the global food supply. Their presentations will be available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org. ●

more realistic models using a system to rate the performance of current models. Oscar recently developed an "acceptable prediction zone" method for evaluating existing models. The method establishes criteria for verifying and validating models, classifying them to show which are best, and then pinpointing changes to improve the models.

According to Oscar, most current broth models predict much higher pathogen numbers than would be present in real food with microbial competition.

Posting poultry pathogen models, as well as other food safety models, on the ERRC's Pathogen Modeling Program Web site (www.arserrc.gov/mfs/pathogen.htm) should accelerate the use of models by food industries and other professionals in the field of predictive microbiology.

Read more about this research in the June issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine, available on the Internet at www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/jun05/poultry0605.htm.

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Newly Formed ARS Laboratory Will Focus on Egg Safety and Quality

Egg safety, quality and marketability are the focus of a new Agricultural Research Service (ARS) laboratory established this year in Athens, Ga.

The new Egg Safety and Quality Research Unit, based at the Richard B. Russell Research Center, will conduct research to protect both the health of consumers and the marketability of eggs. Scientists will develop improved technologies for egg production and processing that will reduce or eliminate microorganisms that can transmit disease to humans or cause spoilage.

One of the unit's key research goals is to determine how microbial pathogens infect poultry and cause egg contamination, according to ARS microbiologist Richard Gast, the unit's research leader. Additionally, scientists will investigate how poultry production practices can influence such infections. Researchers will develop methods to prevent pathogens from infecting egg-laying poultry, and tests to detect infected flocks and contaminated eggs. Ultimately, the research may also help improve egg processing practices, which could reduce microbial contamination while enhancing egg quality.

Researchers in the unit include Gast, veterinary medical officer Jean Guard Bouldin, microbiologist Peter Holt, physiologist Randy Moore, and food technologists Deana Jones and Mike Musgrove. In 2003, an estimated 87.2 billion eggs were produced in the United States, with about 85 percent of them destined for human con-

sumption, according to figures from USDA's Economic Research Service. Per capita consumption of eggs and egg products in 2003 was the equivalent of 254 eggs, an increase of 19 eggs per person from 1990, ERS estimated.

Poultry Science Association Announces Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Poultry Science Association will be held July 31 to August 3 at Auburn University in Auburn, Ala. Registration is \$375 for members, \$80 for student members and \$560 for non-members. The meeting will cover a broad scale of topics on the poultry industry. For program and other information, log on to the Internet at www.poultryscience.org/psa05/.

Grandin Resigns KFC Advisory Role

Colorado State University professor Dr. Temple Grandin has resigned her position as an animal welfare consultant for Yum! Brands poultry giant KFC. Grandin is revered by many for her expertise on animal handling and welfare issues, and serves in a variety of consultant roles for food service companies and animal agriculture organizations alike. Her move came following KFC officials asking welfare consultants to agree not to speak publicly about animal welfare policies. Grandin was joined in her walkout by fellow welfare expert Ian Duncan of the University of Guelph.

"I resigned because there is a document that I can't sign. I feel very strongly that I can talk freely to the press about how the pro-

gram's working, what's been going on with the program," Grandin told Reuters News Service.

KFC has been a major animal welfare target for animal rights activist groups, garnering a variety of media attention about their poultry production practices.

Researchers Study Nutrition Aspects of Chicken Behavior

Researchers at the University of Alberta have discovered that chickens raised for meat can choose whether or not they'll funnel the nutrients they eat towards themselves or their eggs.

That phenomenon of 'reproductive attitude' is a headache for producers who must figure out how to deal with less productive hens that "partition" nutrients needed for egg production into their own bodies. "They like to be a little bit more selfish with their nutrients, and continue growing," said Dr. Martin Zuidhof, an Alberta Agriculture researcher who is collaborating with the University of Alberta to solve the dilemma.

"Some of the broiler breeders are happy to shift their nutrients from the growth of their bodies to egg production, but some of them don't do it very willingly. It is not a conscious thing the bird does, but it does express a tendency of that bird to either be generous or to be selfish with its nutrients."

Channeling food into body-building results in lower egg production, chick production and chick quality, said Dr. Frank Robinson, professor of Agricultural Food and Nutritional Science at the University of Alberta.

The University of Alberta study of 300 high-performance broiler

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breeder hens explores the relationship between the hen's growth and reproductive performance, to improve our understanding of how producers can better manage the birds' body weight during puberty, and also during the egg-laying period that comes later.

No other broiler breeders research program works as closely with individual birds. The research team has shown the importance of recognizing that large poultry populations are made up of a collection of individuals--each with their own way of balancing their growth and reproductive priorities. "Building definitions of 'reproductive attitudes' has been an eye-opening process that challenges basic assumptions about how these birds function," said Dr. Rob Renema, a researcher in the Department of Agricultural Food and Nutritional Science at the University of Alberta.

Individual assessments have identified a small number of 'super-hens' that have an incredible growth potential and are also capable of producing many more chicks than usual. The more typical pattern is for the hen to lose some body weight to support egg production. "The trouble with this is that these 'martyr birds' may eventually suffer from burnout when they don't balance their own needs well enough," Dr. Renema said. Discovery of the exceptional "super-mom" birds that don't fit the textbook norm has opened new doors in the research program. "If the offspring of these special hens are also more efficient, the broiler industry could move forward in leaps and bounds."

As a result of their findings, Robinson, Renema and Zuidhof have broadened their research focus

to include exploration of links between hen reproductive attitude and broiler quality. Their work will contribute to the production of high-quality broilers and to the growing research focus on development of high-quality, value-added poultry products.

USPOULTRY Plans Poultry Care and Handling Conference

The U.S. Poultry & Egg Association Poultry Care and Handling Conference will be held Aug. 10-11 at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta, Ga.

Some of the highlights of the conference are: Animal Welfare Audits . . . Are You Prepared?; Care and Handling in the Hatchery, the Poultry House, and at the Processing Plant; and Automated Catching Status Report. Members of the Poultry Care and Handling Planning Committee are: Zeb Bost, Gold Kist Inc.; Dr. Sam Christenberry, Perdue Farms; Wesley Hammack, Keystone Foods; Dr. Phil Strayer, Sanderson Farms; Dr. Donald Waldrip, Wayne Farms; Dr. Bruce Webster, University of Georgia; and Dr. Dave Wicker, Fieldale Farms.

The registration fee is \$100 for employees of companies that are members of U.S. Poultry & Egg Association or \$200 for nonmembers.

The Poultry Care and Handling Conference is sponsored by the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association. For more information on the seminar, contact USPOULTRY at 770-493-9401, e-mail seminar@poultryegg.org or visit www.poultryegg.org.

Krushinskie Named to National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Dr. Beth Krushinskie, vice president of food safety and production programs for the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, has been named to the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Advisory



Dr. Beth Krushinskie

Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection. She will serve a two-year term. The membership of the advisory committee is drawn from a broad range of groups interested in food safety, including producers; processors; marketers of meat, poultry and egg products; academia; state government; and consumers.

Established in 1971, the committee provides advice and recommendations to the secretary of agriculture about meat and poultry inspection programs. The committee generally meets at least twice a year to address food safety and poultry issues that affect the USDA.

Krushinskie's responsibilities at USPOULTRY include monitoring and responding to government proposals and regulations, representing USPOULTRY regarding food safety and food science programs, providing expertise for HACCP programs the association may pursue, planning and implementing food safety testing/monitoring programs for the industry and providing technical assistance on poultry health issues. ●

Avian Influenza: EU Commission Adopts Updated Measures Aimed at Preventing Epidemics

On April 28, 2005, the European Commission adopted new legislation establishing updated EU-level measures on the control of avian influenza. The new measures are expected to be in place January, 2009. Controlling past avian influenza outbreaks has proven very costly and created animal welfare issues related to the mass slaughter of animals. Added to this, there is growing concern about the potential human health implications if a strain of avian influenza would mutate into a virus that is transmissible between humans. The updated measures proposed are based on lessons learned from recent epidemics and new scientific knowledge. An important focus of the legislation is to introduce more measures against low pathogenic viruses to prevent mutation into the highly pathogenic forms that have been responsible

for the most dramatic epidemics and which are more likely to harm human health.

"The current situation in Asia and recent outbreaks of avian flu in the EU has shown us how devastating the social and economic consequences of this disease can be," said EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou. "Beyond the known impact on animal health and welfare, there is a real fear that a mutant strain of avian flu could cause a human influenza pandemic. This proposal aims to set up the best possible system to prevent new outbreaks of avian flu in the EU, to swiftly manage those that do occur and to minimize their negative impact."

The legislation was presented based on lessons learned from recent epidemics, new scientific knowledge on the pathogenesis of the disease, how it spreads and the risks to human health. The aim is to ensure that the most appropriate surveillance and prevention measures against avian flu are in place in the EU and that the health risks, economic costs and the negative impact on society in the event of an outbreak are minimized.

Experience has shown that low pathogenic strains of avian influenza generally do not cause serious disease, which is why the existing EU legislation on avian flu did not set out specific EU-level measures against these strains. However, when they mutate into high pathogenic strains they can cause a devastating epidemic and may also infect humans. This is why the newly adopted legislation will require EU Member States to introduce and reinforce surveillance and control

measures against the low pathogenic viruses, aiming to prevent virus mutation and highly pathogenic forms of the disease.



The new measures are also more flexible regarding vaccination. The use of vaccination will always be strictly monitored and the EU rules will require that vaccinated birds can be differentiated from infected birds. This is very important both for disease control and for trade purposes.

The measures will be managed so that restrictions on the trade in poultry and poultry products from the vaccinated areas can be minimized. Eventual restrictions on trade will be decided on a case-by-case basis. In any case, restrictions will only be applied to the specific regions using vaccination, or even compartments within those regions. All areas of the EU not using vaccination will be able to continue to trade normally. ●

Source: Adapted from a European Commission Press Release

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