



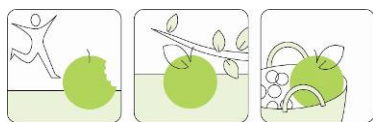
BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR THE MEDIA

AVIAN INFLUENZA AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Brussels, 7 July 2006

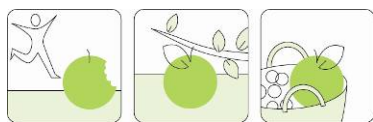
GLOSSARY

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| H5N1 | H5N1 is a subtype of Influenza A virus. The H5N1 virus currently causing concern worldwide (the "Asian lineage") is a highly pathogenic form of that subtype. This virus causes high mortality in many species of birds, but has very rarely spread directly from birds to humans and other animals. |
| H7N3 | H7N3 is another subtype of Influenza A virus. In mid-April 2006 an outbreak of low pathogenic H7N3 was confirmed on a poultry farm in England. |
| AHIT | Avian and Human Influenza Task Force. |
| ALive | African Livestock Partnership. |
| Anti-virals | A pharmaceutical substance which is active against one or more viruses. Antivirals are used to fight specific viruses by interfering with the ability of the virus to spread from cell to cell. They are not vaccines. If used during the early phases of flu virus infection, they can help in reducing the duration of illness in affected humans and the mortality in patients with underlying diseases. |
| ARGUS | General rapid alert system within the Commission to link all specialised systems for emergencies across Directorates-General. It consists of an internal communication network and a specific coordination process to be activated in case of a major multisectorial crisis requiring action at EU Level. |
| Avian influenza | Avian influenza is a highly contagious viral disease which occurs in poultry and other birds. It can be caused by several different subtypes of Influenza A viruses. It is primarily a bird disease, although there have been cases of avian influenza viruses being transmitted from infected birds to humans and other animals. Avian influenza viruses can be of two types: low pathogenic viruses (causes mild disease in poultry and other birds), that are rather common, and highly pathogenic viruses (causes serious disease in poultry and other birds), that are less common. |
| Beijing Conference | At the international Pledging Conference held in Beijing in January 2006, the EU committed a total of around €214 million towards the fight against avian influenza and preparations for a possible human influenza pandemic. |
| Bird flu | Colloquial expression for avian influenza. |
| CMOs | Chief Medical Officers. |
| Common ground exercise | The simulation exercise 'Common ground' was organized by the Commission and carried out on 23 and 24 November 2005. This exercise was the second of two EU exercises tendered by the Commission to evaluate the ability and capacities of Member States to respond to a health-related crisis - in this case an influenza pandemic. |



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| Community reference laboratory (CRL) for avian influenza | Laboratory appointed by the Commission to provide technical assistance to national laboratories and to be responsible for ensuring that EU harmonised testing methods are applied for the detection of AI viruses. |
| Culling | In accordance with Directive 92/40/EEC (now being replaced by Directive 2005/94/EC), if a highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza (such as H5N1) is confirmed on a holding, all the poultry must be culled and destroyed immediately. Farmers and poultry owners who have to cull their poultry and birds as part of avian influenza eradication measures are entitled to compensation for the loss in livestock and the costs of the cleaning and disinfection. |
| CVOs | Chief Veterinary Officers. |
| DG COMM | European Commission's Directorate General for Communications. |
| DG SANCO | European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection. |
| EbS | Europe by Satellite. |
| ECDC | European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Stockholm, Sweden). |
| EFSA | European Food Safety Authority (Parma, Italy). |
| EISS | European Influenza Surveillance Scheme. |
| EMA | European Medicines Agency (London, UK). |
| Epidemic | A disease occurring suddenly in humans (as opposed to an epizootic affecting animals) in a community, region or country not affected within a certain time period before (as opposed to an endemic disease, see "outbreak" and "pandemic"). A sudden occurrence of several outbreaks of an infectious disease. |
| EU contingency plans against avian influenza | EU legislation on avian influenza requires Member States to have contingency plans ready to be implemented in case of an outbreak of avian influenza. Contingency plans must ensure that EU legislation on avian influenza control is effectively and rapidly implemented at national and local level. |
| EU import bans | The Commission has imposed import bans on live birds and potentially risky poultry products (see below) such as fresh poultry meat and untreated feathers from all countries and regions with detected and confirmed outbreaks of avian influenza. These import restrictions are reviewed and updated as appropriate by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFAH) of the Commission, in line with the disease situation in the country concerned. |
| EU legislation on avian influenza | EU legislation on avian influenza is laid down in Directive 92/40/EEC and the new Directive 2005/94/EEC which must be transposed by Member States by July 31, 2007. This legislation sets out rules on the surveillance, control and eradication measures that must be taken in the event of low and highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks. |
| EU national preparedness plan | All Member States have national plans in place against a human influenza pandemic, which they have submitted to the Commission and the WHO (World Health Organisation). |





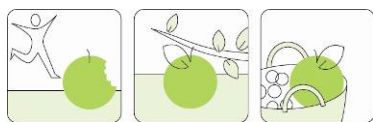
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| | Member States have the main responsibility for pandemic preparedness but the EU is responsible for coordinating their joint efforts. |
| EU pandemic preparedness plan | The EU preparedness plan on avian influenza was adopted by the Commission on 28 November 2005, updating the working paper of March 2004. It sets out a proposed EU response for each phase of an influenza pandemic as defined by the WHO, and clarifies the responsibilities of EU Member States, the Commission and EU agencies in an influenza pandemic. |
| EU stockpile of anti-virals | Member States have been encouraged by the Commission to include stockpiling of anti-virals in their national preparedness plans, and work in progress. However, Member States failed to agree on a shared EU stockpile of antivirals at the Council of Health Ministers in June 2006. |
| Eurobarometer | EU-wide opinion poll, first set up in 1973. Surveys consist of approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per Member State. Reports can be either sector-specific or of a general nature. |
| EWRS | The Early Warning and Response System is the rapid alert system which facilitates structured communication on measures among EU Member States, the Commission and ECDC during events linked to communicable diseases of EU relevance. |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization. |
| Flu | Colloquial form for "influenza". |
| Flu tsar | High-level national official in charge of the co-ordination of avian flu and human flu pandemic preparedness in a Member State's government. (S)he oversees the work of several Ministries / government departments, for instance Agriculture (for avian flu-related aspects) and Health (for human flu pandemic aspects). |
| HPAI | Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. |
| HSC | EU Health Security Committee. |
| IHR | International Health Regulations (WHO). |
| Influenza | A serious disease caused by viruses that in humans infect the respiratory tract. Seasonal influenza is a highly contagious viral disease, which typically occurs as epidemics during the winter. Symptoms include fever, cough, muscle aches and weakness. Annual outbreaks of influenza are due to minor changes in the virus, which can mutate into every year (antigenic drift). As the virus changes, a new vaccine needs to be developed and produced every year. |
| IPAPI | International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza. |
| LPAI | Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza. |
| OIE | The "Office International des Epizooties" or World Organization for Animal Health. |
| Outbreak | Spread of a disease, which occurs in a short period of time and in a limited geographic area (i.e., neighbourhood, community, school or hospital). Small, localised occurrence of a communicable (infectious) disease, often limited to a farm or a village. |
| Pandemic | An epidemic that spreads worldwide and is characterised by excess morbidity and mortality hitting a population not |





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| | <p>previously exposed (see “epidemic” and “outbreak”). An influenza “pandemic” is a worldwide epidemic caused by a new human influenza virus strain or sub-type, possibly resulting from the mutation of an animal strain.</p> |
| Pathogen | <p>Bacteria, virus, parasite, or fungus that has the capability of causing disease in humans or animals. Pathogenic: causing disease or capable of doing so.</p> |
| “Potentially risky poultry products” | <p>These are products liable to carry the avian influenza virus or to be contaminated by such viruses. Such product could cause transmission of infection to poultry or other birds, when brought into contact. For instance, feathers contaminated with faeces of AI infected birds pose such a risk. In the case of HPAI, infection in slaughtered poultry and fresh poultry meat can contain the virus, and poultry or other birds could become infected if illegally fed with kitchen waste, if this waste is not cooked. The EU import ban on fresh poultry meat is therefore essentially a measure to protect animal health more than public health. Indeed, the risk that humans get AI viruses via eating contaminated AI poultry meat (even in the case of H5N1 infection and non-cooked poultry meat) is most likely minimal or even negligible, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the AI viruses cause infection in humans via the respiratory route or via the eyes (conjunctiva) and not via the oral route, and; - humans have to be exposed to massive amounts of the virus that are unlikely to be in chicken meat available on the shelves of supermarkets, while the home slaughtering of poultry involves manipulations of the live bird and subsequently the carcass leading to an exposure to higher amounts of virus. If the bird was infected, large amounts of virus are contained in the viscera of the birds. To manipulate those carcasses may eventually lead to inhalation of the virus or contact of virus with the eye or the nose. Conversely, birds can be infected even if exposed to a minimal amount of virus and they can also catch the infection via the oral route quite easily. - Finally, cooking poultry meat at normal cooking temperature fully inactivates (kills) any AI virus. |
| Protection zone | <p>According to EU legislation, once there is an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, the competent national authorities must establish a protection zone with a radius of 3km around the site of infection. In the protection zone, poultry holdings have to be identified, visited and examined by national authorities and all poultry must be kept indoors. If the outbreak is confirmed, all poultry in the infected holdings must be culled and destroyed immediately. Other measures that must be applied: the entrances and exits of holdings should be disinfected regularly; transport of poultry is banned except for transit by major highways or railways; clinical inspections and testing on farms must take place; movement and trade of poultry carcasses and eggs are subject to restrictions and controls; and fairs, markets, shows or gathering of poultry are to be prohibited. These measures</p> |





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| | must be applied for at least 21 days after the culling and destruction of the birds and the preliminary cleansing and disinfection of the holding(s) on which the outbreak occurred. |
| RASFF | Rapid Alert System for food and feed. |
| SCFCAH | Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health. |
| Surveillance zone | According to EU legislation, once there is an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, the competent national authorities must establish a surveillance zone with a radius of 10km around the protection zone. Within the surveillance zone similar restrictions to those in the protection zone must be applied, but these measures are less intense. Even so all holdings with poultry should be identified and on-farm biosecurity measures must be carried out; the movement of poultry and hatching eggs must be strictly controlled; and fairs, markets, shows or any other gathering of poultry are prohibited. These measures must be applied in the surveillance zone for a minimum of 30 days following the preliminary disinfection and cleansing operation of the holding(s) in which the outbreak occurred. |
| UNSCIC | UN System Influenza Coordinator. |
| Vaccine | A pharmaceutical substance prepared with antigens derived from an infectious pathogenic organism. When introduced into the body, vaccines stimulate the production of specific antibodies or altered cells. This eventually leads to an immunity to the organism. The antigen can be made of whole organisms that may be inactivated or no longer be pathogenic, or parts of those organisms. |
| Virus mutation | Any alteration in a gene from its natural state. This change may cause disease or not. Specific mutations and the evolution in influenza viruses cannot be predicted, making it difficult, if not impossible, to know if or when a virus such as H5N1 might acquire the properties needed to spread easily among humans. |
| WHO | World Health Organization. |
| WHO global pandemic phases | WHO has currently identified six specific phases that would cover the generation of a pandemic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-pandemic period <p>Phase 1: No new influenza subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.</p> <p>Phase 2: No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.</p> • Pandemic alert period <p>Phase 3: Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no () human to human spread, only rare instances of spread to a close contact ().</p> <p>Phase 4: small cluster(s) with limited human to human transmission but spread is still highly localised, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.</p> <p>Phase 5: larger cluster(s) but human to human spread still localized, suggesting that is becoming increasingly better</p> |





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| | <p>adapted to humans, but may not be fully transmissible; a substantial pandemic risk exists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic period <p>Phase 6: Pandemic: increased and sustained transmission in the general population.</p> |
| Zoonoses | <p>Diseases transmissible from animals to humans (zooanthroponoses) or from humans to animals (anthropozoonoses).</p> |

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