



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community Research

EU-FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT

Pathogenesis and improved diagnosis and control of avian influenza infections (Aviflu)

Time of action: AVIFLU started in October 2002, ended in September 2005 and has been extended for another 12 months until September 2006

EU budget (funding): €1.8 million

Until recently, little was known about how avian influenza was transmitted in chickens, or how vaccines reduced transmission. The AVIFLU project is seeking to quantify the effects of vaccination on transmission dynamics. Researchers have shown that two commercially available vaccines against H7 subtypes not only protect chickens against mortality and morbidity, but also reduce the spread of the virus within a flock to such an extent that a major outbreak can be prevented, although some slaughtering may still be necessary.

The project has been extended to enable researchers to conduct additional experiments to assess the role that waterfowl may play in the epidemiology of the H5N1 outbreak in Asia. Preliminary results on the efficacy of one commercial vaccine in ducks are encouraging, suggesting that Europe may need to consider implementing prophylactic vaccination programmes to protect against the inevitable arrival of H5N1.

Project Coordinator is Dr. Jill Banks