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China, Peoples Republic of

Livestock and Products

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak in Anhui Province

2004

Approved by:

Maurice House
U.S. Embassy, Beijing

Prepared by:

Casey Bean

Report Highlights:

Four months after declaring that avian influenza had been stamped-out, on February 7, 2004, China's General Administration of Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) announced confirmation of a case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1 strain) in a flock of chickens on a small-scale farm in Anhui Province. Though not mentioned in the official announcement, China notified this bird flu outbreak, for the first time, to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE). Chinese authorities destroyed all birds within a 3-km radius and immunized all birds within a 5-km radius of the original outbreak. Following is an unofficial translation of the announcement.

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Unscheduled Report
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Four months after declaring that avian influenza had been stamped-out, on February 7, 2004, China's General Administration of Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) announced confirmation of a case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1 strain) in a flock of chickens on a small-scale farm in Anhui Province. Chinese authorities destroyed all birds within a 3-km radius and immunized all birds within a 5-km radius of the infected farm.

Though not mentioned in the official announcement, China notified this bird flu outbreak, for the first time, to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE). According to this report, authorities destroyed 6,640 birds. The "emergency report" can be found at the following OIE website:

http://www.oie.int/eng/info/hebdo/aIS_37.htm#Sec1

Following is an unofficial translation of the AQSIQ announcement.

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF QUALITY SUPERVISION,
INSPECTION AND QUARANTINE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA**

EXTRA URGENT**AQSIQ Foreign Letter [2004] No. 531**

**Information Circular on the Occurrence of Highly Pathogenic Avian
Influenza in Chaohu City of Anhui Province**

Embassies of Relevant Countries in China:

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China presents its compliments to the embassies of the relevant countries in China and has the honor to inform them that the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture has released an urgent circular on the occurrence of avian influenza in Chaohu City of Anhui Province.

As reported by the Ministry of Agriculture on July 6, the China National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory confirmed on July 5 that the death of chickens occurred in Juchao District, Chaohu City of Anhui Province was caused by highly pathogenic H5N1 subtype avian influenza.

On July 3, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture received a report, which states that the death of chickens in Juchao District, Chaohu City of Anhui Province occurred and was initially diagnosed by local veterinary department as suspected cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Upon receipt of the report, the Ministry of Agriculture immediately sent a supervision and inspection group to the above epidemic area to monitor and supervise the control and eradication of the epidemic, the implementation of various prevention and treatment measures and to stop the spread of the epidemic. The local government, according to the relevant regulations, sent specimens to the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory for isolation and identification of pathogens, sealed off the epidemic area in accordance with the Animal Quarantine Law of the People's Republic of China, killed all the fowl within 3 kilometers of the epidemic point and carried out compulsory immunization to fowls within 5 kilometers of the epidemic area. Up to now the epidemic situation has been brought under control and no personnel have been found infected.

Based on the investigation and analysis conducted by experts sent by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, the chicken farm where the epidemic broke out is located on a relatively isolated mountain slope; the chicks were bought locally but the place where the chicks were bought was not affected by the epidemic. However, as the chicken farm where the epidemic broke out is close to Chaohu Lake, it is highly possible that migratory and aquatic birds transmitted the epidemic.

The Chinese department concerned has sent a timely report on the above epidemic situation and its prevention and treatment to the FAO and the WHO, respectively.

Since July 7, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China has suspended export of fowl and fowl products (fowl products--processed as per the treatment standard that they must be treated with a center temperature equivalent to or above 70° Centigrade for at least 1 minute, fowl and egg products such as cooked fowl, fowl bone powder, preserved egg, salted egg and egg powder, down and feather products including down clothes and down quilt, with the exception of water washable down feather, fowl feather powder, etc which meet the national standard)--from Anhui Province, and further strengthened supervision and management over process including production, processing and transportation, etc. as well as exit inspection of fowl and fowl products exported from other provinces, and conducted strict supervision and control of epidemic situation of the export fowl farm concerned so as to ensure safety and hygiene of fowl and fowl products for export.

In view of the fact that various regions in China are provided with natural geographic barriers such as mountains and rivers guarding against animal epidemic disease as well as the epidemic situation prevention system formed by epidemic prevention and quarantine organs at different levels from the county, the region, the province to the state, strict epidemic prevention and quarantine have been carried out to animal and animal products transported via railways, highways, rivers, and aviation in different regions. After highly pathogenic avian influenza occurred in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and some other provinces in January 2004, the Chinese government has formulated and adopted a series of effective measures to control the epidemic situation in time and accumulated experiences.

After the epidemic situation in Anhui Province this time, the Chinese government has also adopted the corresponding catching and killing as well as control and preventive protection measures in strict compliance with the regulations so that the epidemic situation was detected in time, controlled and eliminated within the isolation area. Therefore, we hope that the governments of the relevant countries will observe regulations, under the principle of regionalization of OIE, and implement regionalized policy towards China's fowl and fowl products and should not prohibit the import of fowl from provinces where no epidemic has occurred.

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China requests embassies of relevant countries in China to communicate with the relevant departments responsible for the work in your country and hope that the authorities concerned in your country will accept the rationalized suggestions from the Chinese side, based on the principle of being scientific, practical and realistic as well as the WTO/SPS principle of minimized trade. We are willing to cooperate closely with the relevant departments responsible for the work in your country and enhance exchange and communication of information so as to promote sound development of bilateral relationship.

We appreciate your support to our work over the long period of time.

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection
and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China
(seal)

July 7, 2004