ORDER OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ACTION: Amendment of February 4, 2004, order to embargo bird and bird products imported from Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

SUMMARY: On February 4, 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order immediately banning the import of all birds (Class: Aves) from specified Southeast Asian countries, subject to limited exemptions for pet birds and certain bird-derived products. CDC took this step because birds from these countries potentially can infect humans with avian influenza (influenza A (H5N1)). The February 4 order complemented a similar action taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). On March 10, 2004, CDC lifted the embargo of birds and bird products from Hong Kong Special Administrative Region because of the documented public health and animal health measures taken by Hong Kong officials to prevent spread of the outbreak within Hong Kong and the absence of avian influenza cases in Hong Kong's domestic and wild bird populations. USDA/APHIS took a similar action. On September 28, 2004, CDC extended the embargo on birds and bird products to include Malaysia because of the documented cases of influenza A (H5N1) in poultry in Malaysia. According to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), an international organization that reports the occurrence of animal diseases detected worldwide, in July 2005, H5N1 influenza was confirmed in ducks, chickens, turkeys, and geese in Russia and Kazakhstan. In October 2005, OIE reported that cases of H5N1 in birds were confirmed in Romania and Turkey.

On July 20, 2005, USDA/APHIS adopted as a final rule, an interim rule effective February 4, 2004, amending its regulations to prohibit or restrict the importation of birds, poultry, and unprocessed birds and poultry products from regions that have reported the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), H5N1 in poultry. See 70 Fed.Reg. 41608 (Jul. 20, 2005). As cases have been confirmed in areas, those countries have been added to the USDA/APHIS ban. Currently, the USDA/APHIS ban includes Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, People's Republic of China, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam.

At this time, CDC is adding Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine to its current embargo. This action is effective on December 29, 2005 and will remain in effect until further notice.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Background

On July 23, 2005, the OIE listed Russia among the countries in which an outbreak of avian influenza was occurring. According to the OIE emergency report, there was a laboratory-confirmed report of H5N1 influenza virus in three villages in Russia. The outbreak was reported from July 18 to July 26, 2005, and involved chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese. Laboratory confirmation of H5N1 was completed on August 5, 2005.

On July 29, 2005, H5N1 was laboratory-confirmed in geese and ducks in one village in Kazakhstan.

On October 4, 2005, influenza type illness was reported in chickens and ducks in one village in Romania. From October 7 to 16, 2005, H5N1 was laboratory confirmed in ducks, chickens and swans in 2 villages.

On October 6, 2005, 1700 turkeys in one village in Turkey were confirmed to have H5N1.

On November 25, 2005, influenza type illness was reported in chickens and geese in Ukraine. H5 influenza was confirmed on December 2, 2005. Within the last few days reference labs have confirmed the H5 influenza isolates from domestic poultry to be HPAI H5N1.

The governments of Russia, Romania, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Ukraine have instituted a number of control measures, including depopulation of poultry and other birds, quarantine of flocks, movement control of birds within the country, zoning and clinical surveillance, and disinfection of infected premises. In some regions, hunting of wild migratory birds has been prohibited.

Introduction of influenza A (H5N1)-infected birds into the United States could lead to outbreaks of disease among birds and among the human population, a significant public health threat. Banning the importation of all avian species from affected countries, including Russia, Romania, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Ukraine, is an effective means of limiting this threat. CDC is therefore taking this action to reduce the chance of introduction or spread of influenza A (H5N1).

Immediate Action

Therefore, pursuant to 42CFR71.32(b), the February 4, 2004, order is amended to add Russia, Romania, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Ukraine to the list of countries subject to the order's embargo of birds and products derived from birds (including hatching eggs). All other portions of the February 4, 2004, order, as further amended on March 10, 2004, and September 28, 2004, shall remain in effect until further notice.

Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention