



## U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO COMBAT AVIAN AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

The highly pathogenic (HPAI) form of H5N1 avian influenza has not been found in the Western Hemisphere, but is now present in more than 60 countries in other regions. As of September 2008, there had been 387 confirmed human cases in 15 countries, with 245 deaths worldwide.

About 130 million of Latin America's estimated 560 million people live in rural areas and most have direct contact with chickens and pigs. Poultry provides some 70 percent of animal protein consumption. The poultry industry has become a major source of income and employment. Avian influenza would be a serious threat, were the disease to appear.

The United States combats HPAI H5N1 in the Western Hemisphere by working with governments and regional entities, and with international organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). Through the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, the United States works to elevate the issue on national agendas – and to coordinate efforts between affected nations and donors.

To assist in responding to HPAI H5N1 outbreaks and in preparing for a possible human pandemic, the United States is supporting efforts in the Western Hemisphere through bilateral and regional programs. As of December 2007, the United States had allocated \$33.4 million in the Western Hemisphere as follows:

- \$11.3 million had been committed to bilateral assistance to 19 countries;
- \$22 million had been dedicated to regional assistance programs.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – including the Office of the Secretary (OS), the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Defense (DoD) – including its Global Emerging Infection Surveillance and Response System (DoD-GEIS) represented by the U.S. Naval Medical Research Center Detachment (NMRCDD) in Lima, Peru – and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) contribute to the U.S. engagement in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States is also working with Canada and Mexico through the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and science-

based approach to prepare for and manage avian and pandemic influenza. Together, the three governments have developed the North American Plan for Avian and Pandemic Influenza to enhance collaboration in:

- detecting, containing and controlling an avian influenza outbreak and preventing transmission to humans;
- preventing or slowing the entry of a novel strain of human influenza to North America;
- minimizing illness and deaths; and
- sustaining critical infrastructure and mitigating the impact to the economy and functioning of society.

This Plan has been exercised (October 9, 2008).

### PREPAREDNESS AND COMMUNICATION

U.S. preparedness and communication assistance efforts to the Western Hemisphere include:

- Funding a cooperatively produced documentary with a leading Chilean TV channel, Chilevisión (DOS);
- Sending an expert to Chile to speak to journalism students, journalists and others on reporting on H5N1 issues (DOS, HHS/CDC);
- Supporting pandemic preparedness planning (via cooperative agreements, workshops, and assessments) for Mexico and four South American countries (HHS/CDC);
- Exchanging public-health emergency operations liaison officers with Canada and Mexico to support communications at the operational level (HHS/ASPR);
- Working with global partners to support influenza communication activities in 35 WHO/PAHO countries (HHS/CDC);
- Working in partnership with PAHO and ministries of health in Central American countries to strengthen national capacities for influenza disease surveillance, epidemiologic investigation, laboratory diagnosis, development of national pandemic influenza plans, and exercising of those plans (HHS/CDC);
- Initiating an all-hazards preparedness and response coordination effort in Central America (HHS/CDC);
- Equipping the CDC-Central American program office in Guatemala with satellite technology, Geographic Information Systems, and an Incident Command System for rapid response operations (HHS/CDC);
- Conducting tabletop simulations for pandemic preparedness in Uruguay, Peru, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (USDA);

- Promoting the model of private-public partnerships in regulating and containing animal disease through the attendance of Brazilian and Mexican officials in meetings of the U.S. Animal Health Association and with participants in the U.S. National Poultry Improvement Plan (USDA); and
- Cooperating with FAO in country assessment activities in the Western Hemisphere.

## **SURVEILLANCE AND DETECTION**

U.S. efforts to assist Western Hemisphere countries in building capacity for surveillance and detection include:

- Supporting laboratory training in 32 WHO/PAHO countries (HHS/CDC);
- Participating in assessments of laboratory capacity for influenza diagnosis in eight countries in the region (HHS/CDC);
- Disseminating the PAHO/CDC Influenza Surveillance Generic Protocol to Central American ministries of health to help each country develop its own national influenza surveillance protocol in less than a year (HHS/CDC);
- Assisting ministries of health in Central American countries to implement their national influenza surveillance protocols via technical assistance, training, and delivery of equipment and supplies (HHS/CDC);
- Providing equipment for national public health laboratories in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic to identify and test respiratory viruses (HHS/CDC);
- Supporting the Gorgas Memorial Institute of Panama to establish a Regional Health Training Center for Central America, training over 1,400 health professionals in pandemic influenza detection (HHS/OS, HHS/ASPR), increasing laboratory capacity for analysis of seasonal and pandemic influenza viruses, establishing a surveillance system, and training field teams in sample collection and containment (HHS/ASPR);
- Hosting a regional meeting in Argentina to present country-specific data, regional/multinational modeling efforts, policy-relevant findings, and a training workshop on epidemiological and modeling methods (HHS/NIH);
- Delivering a workshop on avian disease in Central America for Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras (USDA);
- Training and supporting training for officials, veterinarians, epidemiologists, and laboratory diagnosticians from 30 Western Hemisphere nations (USDA);
- Delivering rapid diagnostic testing kits (Fludetect) to nineteen countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America (USDA);

- Providing equipment to nineteen countries in the region to deliver virus samples to reference labs (USDA);
- Cooperating with PAHO to provide training for Caribbean and the Andean countries, and providing information on sample-delivery procedures to government officials (USDA);
- Sending poultry experts to assist Jamaica in assessing laboratory and rapid response capabilities (USDA);
- Training USDA personnel posted in countries in the hemisphere to assist in responding to future outbreaks;
- Implementing an electronic surveillance system (Alerta) in multiple countries, including Panama, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador, to detect influenza-like and severe acute respiratory illnesses (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD);
- Coordinating with the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture, University of San Marcos and the Wildlife Conservation Society to assess the risk of influenza transmission from wild birds to poultry and other domestic animals (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD);
- Enhancing local capacity for surveillance by demonstrating and offering training in viral detection and providing Ministries of Health with reagents, laboratory equipment and personnel (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD); and
- Collecting respiratory samples from 57 sites in ten countries in Latin America (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD).

## **RESPONSE AND CONTAINMENT**

U.S. response and containment assistance efforts to the Western Hemisphere include:

- Supporting response training in 32 WHO/PAHO countries (HHS/CDC);
- Stockpiling supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), antibiotics, and sample collection kits in Guatemala for emergency use by Central American laboratories and rapid response teams (RRTs) (HHS/CDC);
- Conducting rapid response training for avian and pandemic influenza for eight Central American countries (HHS/CDC);
- Assisting ministries of health in eight Central American countries to institutionalize RRTs (HHS/CDC);
- Training health care providers, other public health practitioners and veterinarians in outbreak response in multiple countries including Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD);
- Building the capacity of response teams from ministries of health through training and support for laboratory diagnostics (DoD-GEIS/NMRCD).

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The U.S. Government's official website on avian and pandemic influenza is [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

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**This region encompasses:** Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.