



UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT ON AVIAN AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

The United States is working with countries in Asia, the Near East, Europe, Eurasia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and with key international agencies like the World Health Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, to assist in preparedness for, surveillance of, and response to a potential outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza and the subsequent threat of a human influenza pandemic. The following are highlights of actions taken by the U.S. Government to address this challenge.

PREPAREDNESS AND COMMUNICATION

- The United States is supporting avian influenza preparedness efforts in at least 53 countries in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and other international and in-country partners.
- U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Health and Human Services (HHS), Interior, and Defense, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have deployed scientists, veterinarians, public-health experts, physicians, and emergency response teams to affected and high-risk countries to assist in the development and implementation of emergency preparedness plans and procedures for the response to avian and pandemic influenza.

The U.S. contribution of \$334 million was the largest cash pledge among bilateral donors at the Beijing donors' conference in January 2006, where the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza worldwide. At the June meeting of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Vienna, the U.S. increased its pledge by \$28 million. As of September 2006, our total contribution was further increased to \$392 million. Our contribution is being used for overseas programs to:

- Facilitate the development of national plans.
- Support development of diagnostics and laboratory capacity.
- Stockpile personal protective equipment and emergency health commodities.
- Conduct international communications campaigns and public outreach activities.
- Train responders to animal and human outbreaks.

Of the \$392 million pledged by the United States, funds are going to a variety of activities to prevent and respond to avian and pandemic influenza threats, including the following:

- \$56 million to develop stockpiles of health supplies to contain human and animal outbreaks.
- Over \$36 million to support avian and human influenza-related activities of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).
- \$41 million for international research.

- The U.S. is collaborating with Canadian and Mexican counterparts on a comprehensive North American Pandemic Influenza Plan through the Security and Prosperity Partnership. This endeavor also utilizes other regional partnerships to strengthen preparedness.
- Through USAID and HHS, the U.S. is supporting

communications and public education activities in at least 72 countries to generate awareness about avian influenza and to promote healthy behaviors and practices to reduce the risk for disease transmission. These messages are geared toward audiences ranging from the general public to high-risk groups, such as poultry farmers.

SURVEILLANCE AND DETECTION

- The United States is supporting efforts to improve animal and human disease surveillance systems, capacity for laboratory diagnosis, and early-warning networks in more than 40 countries. It is also working with its partners to expand on-the-ground surveillance capacity and improve knowledge about the movement and changes in H5N1 avian influenza on a global scale. This includes support for upgrading and improving national and regional laboratories as well as sample collection and shipping to ensure countries are able to quickly confirm the presence of the H5N1 virus.
- In 2004, the United States launched the Influenza Genome Sequencing Project. As of August 2006, genome sequences of more than 1,400 human influenza isolates have been made publicly available.
- Veterinarians and diagnosticians from affected and high-risk countries are being trained at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, to conduct accurate confirmatory tests on animal specimens. USDA also has deployed specialists and provided testing materials to priority countries to further strengthen diagnostic laboratory capacities for timely detection of HPAI in animal populations abroad.
- Representatives from the U.S., Canada and Mexico are coordinating surveillance efforts for the early detection



of H5N1 in wild birds of North America through the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management.

RESPONSE AND CONTAINMENT

- The U.S., with FAO and WHO, is training first responders to contain animal outbreaks and to mitigate the impact of animal outbreaks on human populations. The U.S. is also working to enhance the capacity of affected countries to manage response efforts.
- Since January 2006, USAID has deployed approximately 93,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to 66 countries for use by responders in the field, including surveillance workers and outbreak-response teams. USAID is also building a stockpile of 1.5 million PPE kits, 100 lab kits, and 15,000 decontamination kits for critical countries around the world in anticipation of new avian influenza outbreaks.
- In addition, a stockpile of antiviral medications has been positioned in Asia for potential use in the region in response to a pandemic outbreak.
- In cooperation with WHO, U.S. experts have participated in investigations into human cases of avian influenza in affected countries. The U.S. is also providing substantial technical assistance, in cooperation with the FAO and OIE, for influenza containment activities in 28 countries that have experienced animal outbreaks.
- The United States is providing expertise and funding to assist FAO to develop an FAO-OIE Crisis Management Center that will enable it to organize an international rapid response to animal outbreaks of avian influenza worldwide, integrated with human surveillance efforts in conjunction with WHO. Through the FAO-OIE Center, USDA has deployed specialists on rapid-response missions to both Sudan and the Ivory Coast. The U.S. Department of Defense is planning military-to-military training and exercises, and is assisting other countries in developing military preparedness and response plans.

