



Fact Sheet

CFIA's Role in Preventing the Introduction and Spread of Avian Influenza in Canada

With its responsibilities for protecting the health of Canada's domestic animal populations from foreign animal diseases, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is one of the front line organizations in Canadian efforts to limit the introduction and spread of Avian Influenza (AI).

The agency executes its prevention activities in close collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, Environment Canada, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and other federal organizations, provincial and territorial governments, industry associations and animal health practitioners.

The CFIA has recently established an Avian Influenza Advisory Committee, including members of industry, academia and the animal health community, to gain the benefit of their experience and expertise in the development of policies, strategies and protocols for AI prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

CFIA AI activity focuses on five areas: import controls, surveillance of domestic poultry and wild birds, biosecurity, disease response strategies, and international cooperation.

The principal activities are:

- setting import restrictions on poultry, poultry products and birds from other countries.
- surveillance of domestic poultry and wild birds in Canada,
- promoting awareness and adoption of biosecurity best practices in the poultry industry, international travel and commercial importing,
- developing and implementing foreign animal diseases emergency response plans.
- contributing to international efforts to combat AI in affected countries.

Import Controls

The CFIA has authority (under the *Health of Animals Act*) to impose restrictions on the importation of animals and animal products from countries that have been confirmed as being affected by a reportable disease, such as avian influenza. The agency prohibits imports of poultry, poultry products and birds from countries not recognized as free of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the commercial poultry sector.

The CFIA works with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to ensure that poultry, poultry products and birds from affected countries do not enter Canada. The two agencies are working together to enhance detection of illegal imports of live birds and reinforce questioning of passengers arriving from AI affected regions about planned travel to Canadian farms.

Surveillance

The CFIA has partnered with provincial and university laboratories to improve surveillance and early detection of notifiable avian influenza in Canada by establishing a National Avian Influenza Virus Laboratory Network (AIV-LN) for rapid testing and reporting. The network is led by the National AI Reference Laboratory at the National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease (NCFAD) in Winnipeg and six provincial and university laboratories located in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island.

The CFIA is a contributing partner in Canada's 2006 Wild Bird Survey which is a joint initiative of the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre, the Government of Canada, and provincial and territorial governments. The goal of the project is to better understand the presence and characteristics of avian influenza viruses circulating in Canada's wild bird population. Sampling of birds was conducted along six migratory flight paths across the country in the first survey in 2005.

In 2006, CFIA in collaboration with the Canadian poultry industry and provinces, will launch a commercial poultry survey to develop a better understanding of the extent and characteristics of AI in the domestic poultry flock.

Biosecurity

The CFIA promotes the adoption of best practices in biosecurity by the Canadian poultry industry, including providing technical support. The agency is establishing a new Office of Biosecurity to define and expand biosecurity initiatives covering a broad range of issues including foreign animal diseases and invasive species.

Travellers Campaign - Public Awareness

The CFIA is working with several partners, including CBSA, Transport Canada, international airports and commercial airlines, on a campaign to promote awareness among international travellers to and from Canada of AI and other diseases. The campaign reminds Canadian travellers, visitors and importers of their responsibilities to protect Canada from foreign pests, viruses, and animal diseases such as AI, which they may unintentionally bring into the country through food, plants, animals and related products. A range of multi-media products and mechanisms are designed to get the message out to Canadians and visitors to Canada.

Foreign Animal Disease Response Plans (FADES)

CFIA is updating with provincial governments the joint foreign animal disease emergency support agreements which define the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the case of a disease outbreak. These plans are based on four major disease control principles: rapid detection of newly infected flocks; halting the spread of the disease, through movement controls and the rapid destruction of infected flocks; movement controls and surveillance on high risk contact flocks and proximal flocks; and preventing reinfection through the effective biocontainment of infective material (carcasses, manure and feed).

Supporting International Efforts

The CFIA strongly supports the global coordinating role of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). In October 2005, Canada hosted an international meeting of Health Ministers. A key outcome of this meeting was the recognition that controlling the disease at its animal source is important and the most effective means of preventing an influenza pandemic.

In support of this international effort, the CFIA has undertaken several initiatives on animal health-related issues. The CFIA is working with the OIE on the development of new international biosecurity guidelines for the raising, handling and transporting of influenza susceptible animals. The CFIA has made a proposal to the OIE for the designation of Canada's National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease (NCFAD) in Winnipeg as an OIE World Reference Laboratory for avian influenza.

The CFIA is active internationally in promoting the adoption of science-based standards for international trade. To impose restrictions that do not respect established standards set by the OIE has the great potential to serve as a deterrent to countries to make the appropriate investments in surveillance and transparency in disease reporting which are fundamental to global security and prosperity.

The CFIA and the US Department of Agriculture are developing a joint strategy and incident management protocols for avian influenza planning and response.

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