AI threatening America again


On January 11th 2015 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) identified an avian influenza in Delaware County, New York. This was the first outbreak of the highly virulent H5N2 strain in the United States. Delays in the diagnosis and containment of the disease were reported, which allowed the virus to spread rapidly, infecting over 2,000 birds in less than two months. The virus then spread to other states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The USDA quickly implemented a program to eradicate the disease, which involved the culling of all infected birds and testing of the population to ensure that the disease was contained. This effort was successful, and the last positive test was recorded in late February. The USDA estimated that the cost of the eradication program was $100 million.

Belize's infected area regains free status

By Moises H. S. Camargo, on Sept. 2015

As of September 2015, Belize has been declared free from avian influenza. The country had previously been affected by the virus in 2013, but through proper control measures, including the culling of infected birds and the testing of the population, the disease was successfully contained. This is a significant achievement for Belize, as the country is a major producer of poultry and avian influenza is a major threat to the poultry industry.

Dominican Republic's free from AI

By Lincoln Carbon, 13 Sept. 2015

Since 2013, the Dominican Republic has implemented an aggressive control program to eradicate avian influenza. This program involved the culling of infected birds, the testing of the population, and the vaccination of the remaining birds. The country has been declared free from avian influenza since September 2015, and the program is ongoing to ensure that the disease is kept at bay.

AI in the whole World since Nov. 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>H5N2</th>
<th>H5N1</th>
<th>H5N3</th>
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Caribbean scales up preparedness plans for AI

Workshop in Barbados, July 2016

The Caribbean region has been preparing for an avian influenza outbreak due to the high risk of the virus spreading from Asia. The region has been working on developing a preparedness plan, including the development of a regional plan, the establishment of a network of laboratories, and the training of personnel. The Caribbean Animal Health and Quarantine Authority (CAHQA) has been playing a key role in coordinating these efforts.

Preparedness and response plans for AI:

- Developing a regional plan
- Establishing a network of laboratories
- Training personnel

Training in CRs for Animal Health Surveillance, Belize, 15 Nov. 2015

The training program is focused on improving the capacity of the region to detect, monitor, and respond to avian influenza outbreaks. The program includes training in laboratory procedures, epidemiology, and communication.

How Barbados is preparing for AI

By Faculty of Agriculture & Lands. 15 Feb. 2016

Barbados has been preparing for an avian influenza outbreak by implementing a range of measures, including the development of a preparedness plan, the establishment of a network of laboratories, and the training of personnel. The government has also been working with the Caribbean Animal Health and Quarantine Authority (CAHQA) to develop a regional plan.

AI field simulation exercise in Dominica

By Regional Office, July 2015

Dominica has been conducting field simulation exercises to test the preparedness of its response plan. These exercises involve simulating an avian influenza outbreak and testing the ability of the region to detect, monitor, and respond to the outbreak. The exercises are being conducted in collaboration with the Caribbean Animal Health and Quarantine Authority (CAHQA).

Editorial team

The CaribVET Bulletin is a special edition focusing on the threat of avian influenza. The editorial team includes experts in animal health and disease control.
The Caribbean region is on high alert for the entry of AI viruses since H5 highly pathogenic strains spread across the US last year. The unprecedented epizootics affected nearly 50 millions of birds over 21 states (wild birds, backyard poultry, commercial turkey, broilers and egg layer farms). Culprits? Wild birds, but also wind, rodents, people and vehicles moving between farms, highlighting the importance of strengthening biosecurity measures at the farm level; capabilities to rapidly detect HPAI; surveillance for early warning signals; preparedness and response capacities. The first CaribVET health bulletin dedicated to AI intend to share regularly knowledge on AI worldwide situation, in the Americas and in the Caribbean, but also to provide information on preparedness at the national levels and at the regional level. We hope to encourage information sharing among the veterinary services in the region.

We hope you will enjoy reading this first issue and that you will find it useful!
AI threatening America again


On January 15th 2016 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) submitted a notification to OIE for a different strain of Avian Influenza (AI). The immediate notification was due to a highly pathogenic H7N8 outbreak in an Indiana turkey farm starting on January 11th 2016. Thereafter, the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) announced nine more commercial turkey farms in Dubois County tested positive, involving a total of 240,900 turkeys.

It is unclear the final threat from H7N8 will be to the US poultry industry because Indiana is the US fourth-largest turkey producer, the third-biggest egg producer, and first in duck production. Nonetheless, the reinforcement of both surveillance and response plan after the AI events of last year may help to reduce the risk of further spread and the potential impact of this treat.

Genetic analysis of the recent Indiana viral isolates may elucidate its origin. It is not known whether the new virus incursions in North America arrived via the same flyways pathway in which EA HPAI H5N8 arrived. Additionally, it is unknown whether the Eurasian (EA) origin H5 viruses that affected the US last year and their resulting progeny persisted within the North American wild bird population will cause new infections in poultry but this highlights the continuous and varied treat of AI to the poultry industry.

Due to its location and the existence of natural and man-made wetlands, the Caribbean is an important wintering and staging area for birds that are migrating further south from North America. Several water bird species including those that are major reservoirs of Avian Influenza virus migrate through or winter in the Caribbean islands. Considering the importance of the poultry production and poultry and poultry product consumption in the Caribbean, biosecurity and surveillance must be enhanced within the Caribbean region.

Read more on...
The Caribbean Poultry Association took the initiative to hold an all-day emergency meeting on 30 March 2015 specifically to deal with the epidemic in the USA and the possible impacts on the supply of hatching eggs and introduction of HPAI into the region.

Additionally, CPA has been working with CaribVET and FAO using funding available from the 10th EDF under the SPS initiative to develop biosecurity posters and checklists as well as to have training workshops is several Eastern Caribbean countries especially for small & backyard farmers. The aim of this initiative is to improve levels of biosecurity in the smaller farms. CPA members are to extend and add to these initiatives and efforts since our industry will be the first affected and will be the first responder to any interruption to the supply of hatching eggs and/or to any disease introduction.

In January 2016 at their 28th Board Meeting, CPA members agreed to work very closely with the Governments of Member States to: Improve biosecurity at ports of entry; work with regional CVO to agree on zoning/compartamentalization programmes that meet OIE Guidelines; Increase migratory bird surveillance; Develop national avian influenza management programmes incl. simulation; Improve laboratory capability; Develop national sensitization programmes; Develop programmes for possible depopulation and disposal; Develop insurance and indemnity programmes for farmers.
Belize's infected area regains free status

By M.Depaz & V.Gongora 09 sept. 2015

BAHA will today lift quarantine and other control measures implemented in the Cayo District following the detection of low pathogenic avian influenza H5N2 in January 2015. The last case was detected on the 5 June 2015 and depopulation and decontamination were completed by the 9 June 2015. In compliance with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) international standard, BAHA can declare the area once again free of avian influenza three months after decontamination. Quarantine control measures and the direct losses borne by the producers in the infected area have cost government and the poultry industry over BZ$6 million.

The successful eradication of this avian influenza disease outbreak was possible because of government's immediate and strong intervention...
Dominican Republic's free from AI

By Lissette Gomez, 13 sept. 2015

Since 2006, the Dominican Republic has implemented an AI surveillance program based on passive surveillance with compulsory reporting for the early detection of AI. Active surveillance to confirm the absence of virus circulation as well as control and eradication measures were initiated and strengthened after the first detection of LPAI on a fighting cock on 10th December 2007, within the frame of AI surveillance of birds for exports. Active surveillance includes sampling of fighting cocks, backyard birds and birds in markets and in commercial bird farms in the whole country as well as wild, ornamental and migratory birds. The surveillance programs are accompanied by an AI emergency response plan and sufficient diagnostic capacity for identifying the influenza virus. For collect and transport of samples, in the past years DIGEGA trained about 100 veterinarians and veterinary assistants.
Caribbean scales up preparedness plans for AI

*Workshop in Barbados, July 2016*

Caribbean veterinary officials and members of the poultry sector are on high alert and have been working tirelessly to scale up the preparedness planning to prevent the introduction and spread of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

The Caribbean Animal Health Network, known as CaribVET, and the Caribbean Poultry Association (CPA) convened a three-day Avian Influenza Regional Preparedness Meeting in Barbados to review and further develop a regional strategic plan to safeguard food security and the livelihoods of communities across the region. The Meeting was held at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel 6-9 July. Over the past six months, this new virus, known as HPAI H5N2, has been wreaking havoc in North America. To date, more than 50 million birds have either died or have been destroyed and the disease has cost the industry and governments billions of dollars.

*Training in GIS for Animal Health Surveillance, Belize, 13 Nov. 2015*

Veterinary officials from 13 Caribbean countries participated in an intensive training workshop on Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for animal health surveillance using the Caribbean Veterinary Information System (CVIS).

The workshop was held in San Ignacio, Belize between November 9th and 12th and was conducted by the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) in collaboration with the Centre de Coopération International de Recherche en Agronomie pour le Développement (CIRAD), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Belize Poultry Association (BPA).

The primary focus of the training was to develop the GIS capacities and improve the skills of the participants including epidemiologists, veterinary officers, agricultural officers and extension officers.
## AI in the whole World since Nov. 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Virus Type</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Outbreaks</th>
<th>Slaughtered Birds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA (Indiana)</td>
<td>H7N8</td>
<td>Turkey, Chickens</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>414,223</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Ducks, broilers, Guineafowls, Capons, Geese</td>
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<td>Ducks, Chicken, Peacocks, Gulls, Geese, Swans</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>(as of 05/02/2016)</td>
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How Barbados is preparing for AI


Following the recent outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in North America and Canada, Barbados has increased wild bird surveillance and has put measures in place to improve biosecurity within the poultry industry. As part of their preparedness, they have also begun strengthening the capacity of their Veterinary Services Laboratory (VSL) to perform molecular diagnostics targeting avian influenza.

In October 2015, Dr. Julie-Ann Hinkson and Dr. Kelly Brathwaite of the VSL participated in a 6-week training programme at Cirad, Guadeloupe. Training was administered through Power Point presentations, reading material and hands-on practical learning, where the participants were taught how to handle and manipulate potentially infectious samples under increased biosecurity measures. They both successfully isolated the virus and on completion of their training, had gained sufficient knowledge and skills to enable setting up of a molecular diagnostics unit at the VSL.

Read more on...
Al field simulation exercise in Dominica

By Reginald Thomas, July 2015

The Dominica Poultry Association in close partnership with the Livestock Development Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Office of the Disaster Management and the Food and Agriculture Organization held a two-day Avian Influenza Simulation Exercise to test the country’s preparedness and reactive capacity to Avian Influenza given the elevated threat presented by the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N2 virus currently circulating in wild birds in North America. The outbreaks in the USA had resulted in the destruction of over 49.5 million chicken and turkeys across 22 states at an expense of US$3.3 billion. Dominica’s two-day Avian Influenza simulation exercise began Wednesday July 29th 2015 with a full day of informative presentations and group work on Dominica’s Avian Influenza preparedness and emergency manual. Day two, Thursday 30th July 2015 was the field simulation where five field groups ...
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