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Avian Influenza in 2005

Avian influenza has been found in several locations around the world. A form of the influenza A virus, most of the 144 known types of avian influenza have little or no effect on human health, despite the fact that they can appear in either low or highly pathogenic forms. Pathogenicity refers to the impact the virus has on birds, not on the degree of threat to human health.

The virus — usually identified by an H and N number (hemagglutinin and neuraminidase) — can be carried by wild birds without showing any clinical signs or experiencing mortalities.

The virus has been around for centuries but has recently gained notoriety for the presumed role that a highly pathogenic form of the virus may play if it leads to a modified human influenza A (the flu). There have also been concerns that the virus will itself become more contagious to humans.

In Asia, the H5N1 highly pathogenic form of the virus has demonstrated a limited ability to pass from birds to humans. Most cases of human avian influenza were traced to direct contact with infected poultry. Avian influenza has never been linked to the consumption of properly cooked poultry or to human-to-human transmission. So far, since December 2003, there have been 134 confirmed human cases of H5N1 (highly pathogenic) with a total of 69 fatalities in five countries (World Health Organization; December 6, 2005). The Southeast Asian countries affected are Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Canada's chicken farmers have been vigilant in the prevention of the introduction of avian influenza (and other contagious animal diseases). While avian influenza has become a global concern over the past year, it has been on the radar of farmers for decades.

Cases of low pathogenic avian influenza have been reported in North America before. In Canada, at least three cases of low pathogenic avian influenza have been reported since 1975 – in all cases, there had been no human health risk. To date, the only highly pathogenic case reported in Canada was the outbreak of highly pathogenic H7N3 in B.C. last year.

Farmers want to ensure that consumers are confident in their chicken products and that consumers know that Canada has excellent standards for biosecurity and overall on-farm food safety.

Prevention

While there are many vectors by which a virus can gain access to a barn and come into contact with a flock, a large percentage of these can be reduced substantially by having a strict biosecurity program in place at the farm.

Biosecurity programs are a risk mitigation tool. CFC's on-farm food safety assurance program contains a strict biosecurity component which includes several tools for farmers. As a result of lessons learned during the 2004 AI outbreak in B.C., some amendments have been made to the program and will be part of the audit process in 2006.

The poultry industry also began working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on the creation of an animal disease strategy and separately, an avian influenza surveillance program.

This is timely, because all countries will be required to have surveillance programs for H5 and H7 avian influenzas as a result of the new World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) definitions. The OIE has redefined the reportable forms of avian influenza virus to include low pathogenic forms of both H5 and H7. The highly pathogenic forms have always been reportable.

The first small step towards developing an animal disease strategy was the issue of pre-emptive cull. This first step was crucial to reducing the first response time to the finding of a contagious animal disease in a commercial poultry flock.

The overall animal disease strategy, which is still in development, is based on a three-pronged approach.

The first key is prevention, focusing on how to prevent the disease from entering into commercial flocks to begin with. This involved key areas such as biosecurity and an avian influenza surveillance program.

The second area of concern is how to deal with a reported case of avian influenza in the first 24-72 hours. This involves quickly stamping out any confirmed cases, reducing the period of time to confirm avian influenza

Please see AI p.2

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IN THIS ISSUE

Continued from p.1, AI...
through lab diagnostics and quarantining specific areas to ensure that the virus does not spread.

The third area of strategy is the long-term approach to dealing with a reported case of AI which includes mortality disposal and compensation.

Reacting Quickly

The cooperation between the Canadian poultry industry and the CFIA has already reduced the amount of time required to make a decision on performing a pre-emptive cull to stop the potential spread of a virus. This was most recently demonstrated in mid-November 2005 following a finding of low pathogenic H5N2 on two B.C. duck farms. As a result, all birds on the index premises were depopulated. No commercial poultry farms in the surrounding area contracted the virus. The surveillance zones and all related quarantines affecting 80 premises have been removed.

Within this new level of cooperation, CFIA can use test results from accredited laboratories in the federal-provincial laboratory network. Prior to this, only test results from the federal laboratory could be used to make depopulation orders, which led to the possibility of a significant amount of time to reach such a decision. Currently, accredited laboratories exist in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

The CFIA gains the flexibility to order a flock depopulated based on preliminary test results indicating an Influenza A virus (results available within one day), in conjunction with positive clinical signs of avian influenza in the flock. Prior to this, the depopulation order would not be made until both a positive test for Influenza A and the virus had been isolated (usually requiring several days of additional testing plus shipping time to Winnipeg).

Based on the 2005 B.C. case, this pre-emptive cull protocol will be reviewed in early 2006.

The Upcoming 2006 Census of Agriculture

On May 16, 2006, Statistics Canada will be conducting the Census of Population and the Census of Agriculture to develop a statistical portrait of Canada and its people. The census is a reliable source for describing the characteristics of Canada's people, dwellings and agricultural operations.

Why have a census?

The census is a tool for the future, allowing the government to see where we have come from in order to plan where we are going. No other instrument paints such a clear picture of our communities and our country – the changing ethnic landscape of the mosaic that makes up Canada.

Canada has a legal requirement under the Statistics Act to hold a Census of Population and a Census of Agriculture every five years. Census data is used to plan certain programs that have an impact on all Canadians. The census is required to help the federal government:

- determine federal electoral districts
- administer a wide variety of programs and legislation including: *the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, the Canada Health and Social Transfer Act; the Old Age Security Act*; the Canada Pension Plan and the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment

Individual census information is aggregated – that is, combined with information from other respondents in similar regions or groups to produce statistics. By law, Statistics Canada cannot release any tabulation that would identify the characteristics of individual respondents.

Who else uses census data and how?

The census provides the only source of community-level information for economic, social and demographic conditions and trends occurring in Canada. As such, data from the census is an indispensable decision-making tool used by provincial and municipal governments, business, industry, associations, non-governmental organizations, academia, media, research and individuals. Census information is used at all levels of government to plan important public services including:

- provincial and municipal transfer payments
- education
- day care
- employment and training programs
- health care
- transportation
- fire and police protection

These are just some of the reasons why it is so important to you and your community that you count yourself in by completing your questionnaire on Census Day.

Some results from the 2001 Census of Agriculture: Farm operator data

- The 2001 Census of Agriculture reported 346,200 farm operators, 10% fewer than the 385,600 reported in 1996.
- The group of farmers under 35 years old represented 11.5% of all farmers in 2001, compared with 15.8% in 1996 and 19.9% in 1991.
- Both men and women have increased their rate of working off the farm since 1990, and roughly equal proportions of women farm operators (45.6%) and men (44.2%) worked at non-farm jobs in 2000.
- Types of farming: Poultry and egg farms 8,640 (1996), 7,210 (2001) a change of -16.6%

Poultry industry remained focus of significant growth

Canadian consumers are eating more chicken, more often. Per capita chicken consumption rose steadily between 1996 and 2000, to nearly 29 kilograms a year (30.4 kg in 2004). Farmers reported 126.2 million hens and chickens in 2001. Chickens raised for meat represented 69% of these birds; the rest are laying hens and pullets intended for laying.

The production of broilers, roasters and Cornish hens reached 1.1 billion kilograms, a jump of 35.0% from five years ago. Ontario's and Quebec's combined efforts amounted to just under 60% of total production.

2005 August Wild Bird Survey

An August 2005 survey of migratory waterfowl detected several forms of avian influenza in several of the six Canadian regions studied. Each region took approximately 800 samples. None of the birds were sick and no mortalities were reported. This was seen as an early indicator that the form of the virus found was low pathogenic and is not as virulent as the version found in Asia. This information has been confirmed through later tests.

Low Pathogenic H5N1 – NOT THE SAME STRAIN AS IN ASIA.

"The Public Health Agency of Canada has been working with the CFIA on the testing and has determined that there is no information in these findings suggesting a new threat to human health." (CFIA press release – November 19, 2005)

The survey of the flyways was undertaken because experts believe wild waterfowl are a natural 'reservoir' for avian influenza viruses and that further research needs to be conducted so that baseline data can be gathered. Scientists are also examining the different forms of the virus to see why it has changed during its move across the globe and what impact that may have on future outbreaks.

Finding avian influenza in these studies was expected. The initial results from the survey were announced back in October, over two weeks prior to the finding of low pathogenic H5N2 in a B.C. commercial duck flock.

The North American discoveries are all of the low pathogenic variety and have been previously reported over the years. At least three forms of the virus were found, most were non-reportable and are considered common in wild birds. Less than 100 birds of the 4,800 sampled tested positive.

Most of the birds surveyed in August have since left the regions where they were tested. Authorities further along the southern flyways have indicated no change or increase in mortalities.

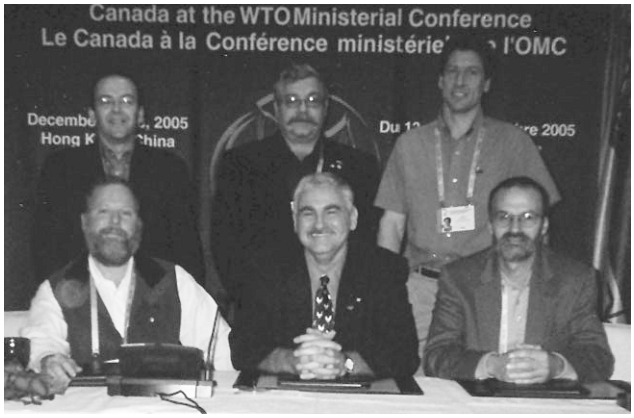
Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization

Farm leaders representing Canadian agriculture were in Hong Kong from December 13-18, as the Sixth Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization took place. Among those farmers were about 30 delegates from dairy, poultry and egg farms, representing provinces across Canada.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy indicated that he hoped that a declaration would be drafted to help bolster the economies of developing countries and establish a timeframe upon which to commence reductions in tariffs and subsidies. He also strongly urged ministers to ensure that a final WTO agreement is reached by the end of 2006.

Canadian delegates advocated a balanced trade position with improved market access, elimination of export subsidies, reduction and further discipline on the use of domestic support spending and the right of countries to maintain domestic marketing systems. Dairy, poultry and egg farmers also insisted that the pillars of supply management, including the ability to predict imports through the use of over-quota tariffs at the border, be built into a WTO agreement.

Canada provides access to more dairy, poultry and egg products than many other countries. We provide access to about 4% of the market for dairy products consumed in Canada; 5% of egg and turkey consumption, 7.5% for chicken and 21% for hatching eggs. In comparison, the United States gives only 2.75% access for dairy products and Europe offers a mere 0.5% access for poultry.



Negotiations continued all week in formal and informal meetings, both among the full membership and in smaller groups. These negotiations were based chiefly on a Draft Ministerial Text of December 2.

Canadian Trade Minister Supports Supply Management

In a speech to the plenary session of the WTO on December 14, Canada's Minister of International Trade, Jim Peterson, committed support for supply management and

Please see WTO p.4

Continued from p.3, WTO..

underscored the importance of agriculture in achieving a positive outcome of the Doha Round.

"In agriculture, Canada seeks to rein-in subsidies and to achieve major improvements in market access," said Peterson. "Canada strongly supports both our supply-managed sectors and our broader community of agricultural exporters."

Peterson called on member nations to resolve to overcome their differences if they are to succeed in delivering the ambitious outcome they have set, stressing the need for these countries to have some degree of flexibility to accommodate their different domestic policy approaches and sensitivities.

"If we are to achieve our objectives in the agriculture negotiations, Hong Kong must underscore the critical importance of agriculture to the development goals of the Round and contribute to progress across all three pillars of the negotiations," he said.

He underscored that, first and foremost, this Round must be a development round, noting that nearly three billion people live on less than two dollars a day. He stressed that these countries need special and differential treatment , and the WTO must support development through trade-related technical assistance and capacity building.

He also called on countries to act outside of the WTO, noting that since January 1, 2003, Canada has provided duty-free, quota-free access for virtually all goods from Least Developed Countries, resulting in imports from these countries doubling in two years.

"All of us, including Canada, must do more for development," he said.

Speaking of progress on the development of modalities in Hong Kong, he said that some progress has been made, but that, despite outstanding leadership from Pascal Lamy, many are still treating Hong Kong as a dress rehearsal.

Recently, the House of Commons demonstrated its solidarity with farmers by unanimously passing a motion calling on Canada to obtain results that ensure supply management is not subject to reductions in over-quota tariffs or further increases in imports. The motion also called on the federal government to ensure a final WTO agreement strengthens the market access position of Canada's agricultural exporters.

"Let us be clear. We are not here for a dress rehearsal," he said. "We have already had it. We are now on stage. It's opening night. And we better be good. The world is watching."

Joint Declaration Supports Farmers Worldwide

During the negotiations, a joint declaration was signed by farm leaders representing hundreds of millions of farmers from developed and developing countries, including Canadian dairy, poultry and egg farmers.

Signatories stressed that the negotiations must be about farmers and their livelihoods. Given that only 10% of agricultural production is actually traded on the world markets, the farm leaders feel that WTO rules should not negatively impact the 90% of agricultural production that is produced and consumed domestically.

Rather, farmers expressed the need to meet their societies' legitimate expectations concerning food security and safety as well as environmental, animal welfare and rural issues, the declaration stated. "We believe that every country has a right to ensure that the concerns of its own citizens about food and agriculture, which extend far beyond purely commercial considerations, are met," it continued.

The declaration stated that countries needed the freedom to determine which products shall be treated as sensitive and the rules governing these products must be flexible.

The Negotiations Continue

Round-the clock negotiations marked the early morning hours throughout the week in Hong Kong as intense discussions among small groupings of WTO members, ran well past midnight. Among the major subjects discussed were agriculture and providing the Least Developed Countries duty free, quota free access to others' markets.

Extensive core consultations were held on several agriculture issues, with the focus being on eliminating export subsidies, providing key questions for consideration and identifying areas of possible compromise.

While intense discussions occurred on establishing an end date for export subsidies, further discussion was needed on

Please see WTO p.5

Continued from p.4, WTO..

ways to treat all forms of export competition before progress can be made. After much negotiation, an end date of 2013 was secured for the elimination of export subsidies provided loopholes are plugged to avoid hidden export subsidies which can be as damaging as the transparent ones.

Still Some More Work to do

With a revised declaration approved by trade ministers, Canada's dairy, poultry and egg industry representatives in Hong Kong returned to Canada, back home to their farms.

Talks will continue in Geneva in 2006. The goal is to establish full modalities, or the numerical formulas which will govern how trade is to be liberalized by April 30 and country schedules for such liberalization are to be tabled by July 31.

Key to Canada's supply-managed sectors of dairy, poultry and eggs is the declaration's reference to market access for sensitive products. In the first revision of the draft declaration, released on December 17, the treatment of sensitive products was linked to the general tariff reduction formula. Thus, sensitive products with high tariffs would have been forced to provide the largest increase in tariff quotas.

The SM-5 delegation informed the Canadian negotiating team that this sentence would be very damaging for the Canadian dairy, poultry and eggs industries, and that a modification was required. When revision two was released on December 18, the SM-5 delegation was pleased that the linkage to the general tariff formula was removed and the new sentence does not limit the possibility of developing an adequate treatment for sensitive products. The new phrase is "we recognize the need to agree on treatment of sensitive products, taking into account all the elements involved".

Both Canadian Ministers attending the Hong Kong meeting reiterated their support to Canadian farmers, particularly to the supply managed sectors and the Canadian Wheat Board. Canadian Trade Minister Jim Peterson said, "We are committed to working with all industries to advance their interests at the negotiating table. Canadians should be able to choose how they market their products here at home. Just because we do it differently, it doesn't mean we do it wrong." He added, "We believe it is possible to reach a balanced approach across all sectors and that is why we want to see the Doha Round succeed."

Farmers must lobby for continued support and maintain an open dialogue with provincial and federal representatives, as we work together to ensure a positive outcome for Canadian agriculture.

Canadian dairy, poultry and egg industries continue to maintain their new website, www.farmsandfood.ca, which provides a wealth of information about supply management and was created to engage and inform Canadian consumers, politicians and media about a system that guarantees them an adequate supply of quality dairy, poultry and eggs.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada — New Logo

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading provider of programs that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of more than 150,000 children, youth and their families each year. In 700 community locations across Canada, clubs offer after-school programs in physical recreation, technology, the arts, personal growth and more.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada
Clubs Garçons & Filles du Canada

Over 100 Boys and Girls Clubs serve more than 150,000 children and youth in communities nationwide. Some three million young Canadians are club alumni. The 700 clubs, some over a hundred years old, are in large city centres, remote rural communities and on First Nations Reserves.

For over 105 years, Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada have carried on a tradition of helping young people to discover, develop and achieve their full potential as adults, citizens and leaders, by engaging them in activities that challenge and enrich their minds, bodies and spirits and nurture their self-esteem.

Their safe, caring club environments and enriching programs have enabled some three million young Canadians to play, learn and develop valuable skills for life. Many clubs also provide meals, emergency shelter, family support programs and other supports to children and youth at risk. To learn more, visit www.bgccan.com.

Recently, the Club announced the launch of a new public identity for its member clubs across Canada. This fresh, new image was created to reinforce the relevance of Boys and Girls Clubs today in tackling many of the critical issues facing children, youth and families in Canada including child poverty, health, youth education and employment, youth violence, substance abuse and youth sexuality.

The new logo with two jumping figures rendered in a vibrant green exudes youthfulness, friendship, excitement and upward aspiration to signify the positive impact of Boys and Girls Clubs on young people in helping them to achieve their full potential through a variety of fun, challenging club programs that encourage healthy living, personal growth, learning, and community involvement.

CFC is proud to be affiliated with such a distinguished and necessary organization.

CFIA Initiates Avian Influenza Survey

Since the outbreak of avian influenza in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia last year, several important steps have been taken to develop strategies to help prevent subsequent occurrences of this scale.

As part of these initiatives, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is in the process of developing a survey to assess the prevalence of low pathogenic avian influenza in Canada.

This is not related to the wild bird survey that was conducted this past August, but rather is the first step to developing a full-fledged surveillance program for commercial production.

The objectives of the survey are to determine the prevalence of low pathogenic H5 and H7 avian influenza in Canada and to help establish protocols for on-going avian influenza surveillance. The results of the preliminary survey will be used to assess the risk to the poultry industry and to determine future disease strategy policies.

The survey will be conducted by taking samples from chickens being processed at federal establishments across the country. All samples will be analyzed at the CFIA National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease laboratory in Winnipeg.

Laboratory results will be based on serological (a blood test to detect the presence of antibodies against influenza) data. A positive test would only indicate that birds had been in the presence of avian influenza at one point in their life, not that they were carriers. Once a positive sample is found an additional farm investigation will take place to determine if an avian influenza virus is present on the farm in the new flock that has been placed.

Safe, Safer, Safest, the Chicken Farmers of Canada on-farm food safety assurance program, has measures in place that dictate the activities required after chickens have been shipped to the processing plant. Farmers must follow strict barn cleaning procedures. Before the next flock is delivered, water lines are disinfected and barns are extremely well cleaned. Due to the importance of insuring a break in the disease cycle, it is highly recommended that the barn be washed with water and disinfected after each flock.

The farm investigation will include blood samples, swabs, clinical status of the birds on the farm, testing the existing collection of sera and an epidemiological questionnaire. If there are no clinical signs exhibited by the birds on-farm, and further testing results in no positive samples, then the investigation will be considered complete.

If there are clinical signs and further testing is positive for Influenza A and virus isolation then the flock will be culled and the farmer will be compensated under the Health of Animals Act.

However, if Influenza A is isolated but the virus isolation (determining if the H-type is H5 or H7) is unsuccessful, the farm will be fully quarantined and further testing would be required to determine if the flock is in fact infected.

The poultry industry supports the principle of the initial survey, and continues to work with CFIA in order to reduce any potential threats to the industry and on the issue of compensation under the *Health of Animals Act*.

Wishing you a Joyous Holiday Season and a New Year filled with Peace and Happiness

From Chicken Farmers of Canada, Directors and Staff

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