

Strategies for the Prevention and Control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Eastern Africa

Nyaga, P N

Date: 2009-08

Abstract

Although Uganda has many wetlands and lies on the migratory flyway for birds flying from Siberia through the Middle East and moving along the great Rift Valley to Southern Africa, it has not yet experienced avian influenza infection. However, the risks of exposure are extremely high given the fact that outbreaks have occurred and continue to occur in Egypt which lies directly along this flyway. It is therefore appropriate to assess the possible bio-security flaws that may arise in all the poultry sectors placing special emphasis on the more vulnerable poultry production systems of sectors 3 and 4. In this regard FAO has commissioned a biosecurity study of all the poultry production sectors in Uganda to identify the potential bio-security risks in order to lay a basis for developing effective control measures and provide guidelines for appropriate bio-security interventions. Bio-security principles are to be incorporated at the conceptual stage of each component of the poultry value chain and then during the actual implementation of the structures to carry out the business. Once these are in place, operational biosecurity principles are designed for the day to day simple procedures and practices which when applied prevent entry into or spread within a farm of disease agents, or the exit of the disease agent from infected premises. The operational protocols are summed up into three principles, namely: Isolation which involves procedures, practices, and manouvres to ensure that clean flocks remain free from disease agents and that disease agents remain confined in infected flocks and do not spread to other premises; Traffic control which includes signage to warn visitors that biosecurity protocols are being observed; controlling movement of stock, persons, goods, equipment and products into the clean farm and out of infected premises; and finally Sanitation, which involves methods that enable farmers to maintain farm houses, vehicles, implements and equipment, remain in a state of sustained cleanliness, and are disinfected. Thus, the flaws and strengths in any of these biosecurity issues were investigated throughout the poultry value chain in Uganda. The exposure to biosecurity risks was found to differ for the respective poultry sectors, as follows: