

## **Appendix 10:**

### **Bird flu (Avian influenza): Information for those involved in outbreak control activities**

Only those who are needed to control outbreaks of AI should be exposed. The Department of Agriculture will take all measures possible to minimise the risk posed to those who will be required to work on outbreak control activities. Prior to starting work on outbreak control, you will be assessed initially to see if you are suitable for undertaking culling activities. Persons at high risk for severe complications of flu (e.g. those with problems with their immune system) those over 60 years old, with chronic heart or lung disease or those for whom oseltamivir (Tamiflu) is contraindicated should avoid working with infected chickens. Those on medications such as steroids should seek medical advice prior to working with infected chickens. For over 200 Department of Agriculture staff, this assessment has already taken place.

#### **Routes of infection with bird flu**

Birds infected with bird flu can shed the virus in saliva, nasal secretions and droppings. Transmission from sick or dead birds can occur via these routes to other birds or to humans. Droppings contain high concentrations of virus and are an important factor in spreading disease. The viruses can survive in the environment for up to 3 months in cool and moist conditions.

#### **Clinical symptoms in humans**

Infection in humans with bird flu can cause flu like symptoms, i.e. cough, temperature, sore throat and coughing as well as diarrhoea. It can cause serious respiratory complications and death.

### **When working on outbreak control activities, please take the following precautions:**

#### **1. Wash your hands**

When you have been in close contact with infected animals you should wash your hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds or use an alcohol based hand rub after:

- Contact with infected or exposed poultry or their droppings
- Contact with contaminated surfaces
- Removal of gloves

#### ***This is the most important measure you can take to prevent the spread of infection***

Do not eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or insert / remove contact lenses in high-risk areas.

Used wipes must be disposed of appropriately.

## **2. Use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided by the Department of Agriculture; this includes:**

Disposable **gloves** made of lightweight nitrile or vinyl, or heavy-duty rubber work gloves that can be disinfected. You can wear a thin cotton glove inside the external glove to protect against contact dermatitis. Change your gloves immediately if they become torn or damaged. Remove gloves promptly after use, before touching non-contaminated surfaces and items.

**Protective clothing**, preferably disposable outer garments or overalls with hoods, or surgical gowns with long cuffed sleeves. This includes protective cover for the hair. (Mop cap or hair net)

Disposable **protective shoe covers** or rubber or polyurethane boots that can be cleaned and disinfected should be worn

**Safety goggles** to protect the mucous membrane of the eyes. It's really important to avoid touching or rubbing eyes with hands after removing the goggles.

**Respirators (masks).** Before starting working on the outbreak, you need to be fitted with the correct type of mask that will form a correct seal. This is known as fit testing.

Disposable PPE should be **properly discarded in sealed plastic bags** and non-disposable PPE should be cleaned and disinfected as specified by the Department of Agriculture. Always wash your hands after disposing of PPE.

### **Make sure you have got instructions and training in how to use PPE**

#### ***Summary of order of removal of protective attire/equipment***

1. Remove gloves\* - use technique that avoids touching the outside surface of the gloves with bare hands
2. Remove gown\* - use technique that minimises the risk of touching the outside surface of the gown
3. Wash/decontaminate hands
4. Remove eye protection
5. Remove mask/respirator
6. Wash/decontaminate hands again

### **3. Take a preventive drug called oseltamivir (Tamiflu)**

You should take oseltamivir 75mg daily as a preventive measure for all of the time that you have contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces, and for 7 days after last contact. If you do become infected with bird flu, this medicine may prevent you from becoming ill or reduce the severity of the illness. Please read the Tamiflu leaflet provided by Public Health, which explains this in more detail. Tamiflu is provided free of charge.

### **4. Get vaccinated against seasonal influenza vaccine**

Most workers involved in outbreak control activities have already been vaccinated. If you have not already been vaccinated against ordinary flu, you should get this year's flu vaccine as soon as possible. This will stop you from having human and bird flu at the same time. Having bird flu and human flu together could lead to changes (mutations) in the bird flu virus to become more infectious for humans. The Public Health Doctor will tell you where you can get this vaccine. Like Tamiflu the vaccine will be free.

### **5. Check your temperature twice a day and look out for flu like symptoms:**

- Fever (38°C or 100.4°F or higher)
- Flu like symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat, temperature or aches and pains)
- Diarrhoea, stomach pains, vomiting

You will be given a thermometer to measure your temperature. .

If you develop any of the symptoms listed here for up to seven days after your last contact with poultry, contact the Public Health Doctor using the phone number supplied. You may be referred to a medical assessment clinic or Accident and Emergency. Make sure you ring first, and tell them about the type of work you do. Avoid contact with others until you have been checked out. You will be given a small supply of masks to wear if you are unwell when seeking medical assistance

You may be asked have a blood test one to 2 months after you start outbreak control activities to check for any signs of infection with bird flu.

**Do not visit other farms or unaffected agricultural locations with poultry or other birds, to avoid spread of contaminated materials.**

If you have any further queries, contact the public health doctor named by the Department of Agriculture liaison manager.

Your Public Health Contact details are:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_