

# Development and Implementation of an Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan for Ghana



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# Outline

- ✓ AI Threat in Ghana
- ✓ Initial Challenges
- ✓ Primary Stakeholders Involved
- ✓ Steps in Plan Development & Overview of Plan
- ✓ Implementation of Plan
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Keys to Success
- ✓ Challenges Moving Forward
- ✓ Current Status and Next Steps



# AI Threat in Ghana

- H5N1 strain initially expected to spread through migratory birds Ghana is a recognized migratory bird destination.
- Cases found in domestic poultry in Nigeria, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire since January 2006.
- Extensive cross-border movement in West Africa, including transport of live poultry
- AI outbreaks in poultry rather than migratory birds have caused adjustments in preparedness and response plans and activities.

# AI Threat in Ghana /2

- Risk of limited bird-to-human transmission among individuals closely associated with poultry production is real and documented in Asia.
- No baseline information on prevalence of AI in bird populations or influenza in human populations in Ghana.
- Pandemic status currently WHO phase 3:  
“Human infection (s) with a new subtype, but no human to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact”



# Initial Challenges

- ❖ Unknown (and potentially weak) disaster response capacity
- ❖ Need to energize and coordinate partners
- ❖ Need for engagement and leadership at both political and technical levels
- ❖ Lack of identified resources to support plan implementation
- ❖ Need to plan for/anticipate multiple scenarios for arrival of virus and its impact

# Primary Stakeholders Involved

- Ghana Health Service / Ministry of Health - **GHS / MoH**
- Min. of Food and Agriculture / Dept. of Veterinary Services – **MoFA / DVS**
- Min. of Lands, Forestry and Mines - **MoLFM**
- National Disaster Management Organization / Min. of the Interior –**NADMO / MoI**
- Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research - **NMIMR**
- **WHO**
- **FAO**
- **USAID**

# Steps in Plan Development

Oct 05	USAID/Ghana responds to AID/W directive on prioritization of AI; Ghana AIWG formed and activated
Oct-Dec 05	Regular weekly meetings of AIWG
Nov 05	Rapid Assessment by AIWG team, including USAID/QHP
Dec 05	Preparedness and Response Plan completed, including cost estimates; Inter-ministerial forum held



# The Plan

- *Employs WHO template which organizes actions around 5 themes:*
  - Planning and Coordination
  - Surveillance Situation Monitoring and Assessment
  - Prevention and Containment
  - Health System Response
  - Communications
- *15 month (2005-2006) estimated cost of \$6.2 million*

# The Plan /2

- ***Developed to respond to following scenario:***

*Where by “the current strain of the virus arrives in Ghana via migratory birds and quickly infects local domestic bird populations in specified geographic foci. Due to the low rate of bird-to-human transmission of this virus, relatively few human cases are detected (among those living/working closely with infected birds). This would mark the arrival of pandemic phase 3 in Ghana.”*



# Implementation of Plan

Jan 06	Broad dissemination to stakeholders; Meeting of development partners
Feb-Mar 06	National Emergency Meeting led by MoFA and MoH; all regions present; MAARD funding to QHP and GSCP (300K) - Virologists trained; procurement support
Apr-May 06	- Communications strategy developed - Active Surveillance planned; carried out
Jun 06	-National Bird Flu Press Briefing, followed by regional briefings



# Active Surveillance

- ***Objectives***
  - Clinical examination of a representative sample of domestic and migratory birds for AI signs & symptoms
  - Laboratory investigation of samples to rule out presence of H5 or H7 viruses
- ***Scope***
  - All 10 regions of country; May 2006
  - 348 sites visited, including 317 flock sites for domestic birds; 1,995 samples collected
  - 95% probability of detecting 1% prevalence



# Active Surveillance /2

## *Description, Products and Results*

- Three teams of 5 members each, 4 tech and 1 driver
- Training manual developed; one-day orientation held
- Laboratory protocols for specimen collection, handling and testing, bio-safety and security
- Forms developed:
  - Checklist for Assessment of Domestic and Wild Birds
  - Laboratory Sample Collection Record
  - Regional and District Coding Sheet and Definitions
- **NO SAMPLES POSITIVE SO FAR FOR H5 or H7**  
(testing completed on 1,000 out of 1,995 samples)

# Communications

- **Materials developed and disseminated by MoFA / DVS and other GoG entities on emergency basis; good initiative but not pre-tested; some design flaws**
- **AIWG communications sub-committee activated in Q1 2006, Ghana Sustainable Change Project (GSCP) involved**
- **Focus Group research in April-May 2006**
- **Perceptions/fear adversely affecting poultry industry; risk to Ghanaian economy**

# Communications /2

- **Conclusion that new communications must change the unnecessary precaution of not eating chicken**
  - *Economy could end up being the greatest casualty of bird flu*
- **Campaign concepts:**
  - **Non-fear based; streamlined, with emphasis on key messages**
  - **Attention getting: delivering key messages through talking chickens (tested well)**



# Communications: Key Messages

- Poultry is safe, just cook chicken and eggs well before serving
- Don't touch birds (chickens) that are found dead. Report sick or dead birds to nearest Ag Officer
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching birds
- Keep chickens in a closed area

# Communications: Theme for Press Briefings

*You've heard  
from everyone  
else...  
now let's hear  
from the  
chicken !*



*You've heard from  
everyone else...  
now let's hear from  
the chicken!*

Accra Bird Flu Press Briefing  
Ghana International Press Center  
June 6th, 2006, 10am-12pm

   

Issued by the National Task Force on Bird Flu



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Ghana Sustainable Change Project



Quality Health Partners

# Press Briefings: Press Kits

- Fact Sheets
  - Bird Flu Basics
  - Economic Impact
  - Consumption Facts
- Cartoon Strips
- Radio Quiz
- Radio Mentions (5-10 seconds) spots
- Chicken Recipes
- “Tidbits” on the Bird Flu

**Bird Flu: Basic Facts**

... live and feed in water; particularly ducks, geese, and swans. ... Bird flu is also known as avian influenza.

... killed many kinds of wild birds. Birds generally catch bird flu by ... their feces (droppings) or from water or soil where infected birds ... sickly among domestic poultry (such as chickens). It rapidly kills ... within two days.

**Bird Flu: Consumption Facts**

According to the people can't get handled and cook danger of getting properly cooked fry. The bird flu is all microorganism heat of normal co centigrade. When sure the meat is n eggs, make sure t

To keep Ghana he follow good hyge

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**Bird Flu: Economic Impact**

Currently, the biggest threat the bird flu poses to Ghana is an economic one that is made worse when people unnecessarily panic and decide not to eat chicken. Bird flu can harm the economy of a country in several ways:

1. People become irrationally afraid and stop eating chicken
2. There is a bird flu outbreak and domestic birds become infected with the bird flu and die
3. There is a bird flu outbreak and domestic birds need to be culled to prevent the flu from spreading

Since there has not been one reported case of bird flu in Ghana, the current impact to the economy all stems from point number one: People become afraid and stop eating chicken. This has created a large impact in Ghana. Based on sales numbers from Ghana's largest seller of chicken, chicken sales have dropped by more than 70% from October 2005 to April 2006. The decrease in sales has been a steady decline.

Month	Year	% Chicken Sales Decrease From Previous Month
Oct	2005	—
Nov	2005	↓21%
Dec	2005	↓23%
Jan	2006	↓18%
Feb	2006	↓19%
Mar	2006	↓16%
Apr	2006	↓18%

This negative impact on the economy is unnecessary, since there is no risk of getting the bird flu from properly cooked chicken and eggs. It is important that Ghanaians understand that the bird flu is currently a low risk health threat to humans and you can not get the bird flu from properly cooked chicken. The virus that causes the bird flu is killed by the heat of normal cooking, at or above 70 degrees centigrade.

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# Keys to Success

- USAID/Ghana has taken the threat (and the challenges it presents) seriously
- Prior investments in disease surveillance system
- USAID vision and willingness to take lead and become directly involved
- Good working relationships with key players
- Flexibility
- Available mechanisms to access quick inputs (QHP, GSCP)

# Keys to Success

- Rapid, active and sustained engagement of GoG resources and structures
- Existing capacities of many GoG structures to be applied to AI surveillance and response
- Engagement of “new”/additional partners such as U.S. Peace Corps (135 PCVs in Ghana; 1,400 in West Africa)



# Challenges Moving Forward

- Need increased high level political commitment
- Need to identify more resources for fuller implementation of Plan
- Need for partners to recognize opportunity to strengthen basic, necessary surveillance and response systems in all sectors in the name of AI preparedness
- Need to keep momentum, and continue sensitization and surveillance activities given presence of AI in poultry in proximate countries



*Thank you !*



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