

Government of India
Ministry of Agriculture
Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
9th February 2008

Media Brief

The salient developments on the above subject up to 9th February, 2008 (12.00 Noon) are given below:

1. There are no further reports from the HSADL, Bhopal of any sample testing positive from any part of the country, including West Bengal.
2. A total of 273 Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) were engaged (145 in culling, 44 in surveillance / mopping and 84 in disinfection and sanitization) in West Bengal, which completed culling of 48,282 birds, taking the cumulative figure of culling done so far to 36.63 lakh.
3. The latest figures of eggs and feed destroyed till 08.02.2008 are 14,86,819 and 80,016 kg respectively.
4. Unusual mortality of 33 birds on 8th February, 2008 was reported from South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts. This takes the cumulative mortality to 1,33,129 poultry birds, which has been reported from Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Nadia, South 24 Parganas, Burdwan, Bankura, Hooghly, Malda, Coochbehar, Purulia, Howrah and North 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal.
5. In Assam, the preventive culling has been completed in Dhubri district. The same is also expected to be completed in the other district of Kokrajhar by 10th February 2008, whereafter mopping operations will commence. Bihar has also completed 19% of the culling. As per report received from Jharkhand, it is engaged in identifying areas for culling. Orissa's plan of action is awaited.
6. It has been reported in a section of the media that the game of badminton in the country is suffering as a result of the ban imposed on the import of feathers and shuttle-cocks from bird-flu positive countries. In this connection, it may be clarified that the said ban has been in existence since February 2004 for the reason that the feather follicles may contain pieces of skin, meat and traces of blood while being removed from the skin at the time of post-slaughter processing. This could be a potential source of infection if the feathers are collected from the infected birds. Secondly, excreta of infected birds contains large amount of virus which remains infective for at least three months. In a poultry house, the bird feathers get soiled with excreta on the floor. Such soiled feathers are also potential source of infection. The process of disinfection of feather to make it safe from bird-flu perspective is an area which is under study at the OIE, which is the apex international body for animal health corresponding to the WHO. Hence, it is not considered appropriate to lift the ban. It is presumed that the concerned authorities would have made alternative arrangements to source the shuttle-cocks since the ban has been in existence for three years. However, there is no ban on the import of shuttle-cocks from bird flu negative country at any given time.
7. The Government of India has written to all the States/UTs (other than West Bengal) not to impose any restrictions on the inter-state movement of poultry and poultry products.