



**23 February 2017  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**8<sup>th</sup> EMERGENCY EXERCISE TO TEST OPERATIONAL READINESS IN THE  
EVENT OF A BIRD FLU OUTBREAK**

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority's (AVA) eighth emergency preparedness exercise to test AVA's crisis management framework and operational readiness in responding to an outbreak of bird flu was successfully concluded on 23 February 2017.

2 Code-named "Exercise Gallus VIII", the exercise tested the operational readiness of AVA's third-party logistics partner, ST Logistics Pte Ltd in the case of an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or bird flu, at a local poultry farm. ST Logistics is our key logistics vendor which will supply stockpiled items and support services to AVA during a bird flu outbreak in Singapore. We have been working with them since 2016 to plan the exercise and fine tune the delivery of their services and our operations plan.

3 The objectives of the exercise were to test the effectiveness and efficiency of ST Logistics in:

- Setting up of temporary infrastructure required to support bird flu operations on a poultry farm;
- Delivering the essential supplies such as personal protective equipment;
- Delivering support services, such as assisting officers in the donning of personal protective equipment and decontamination.

4 The objectives of the exercise were met. All the required temporary infrastructure were set up within the stipulated time frame on site. All essential supplies were also delivered as planned. Overall, the exercise provided our logistics service provider, the farm and our staff the opportunity to go through the ground realities and identify where adjustments were needed to suit the ground situation. This will allow AVA to further refine our emergency plan. For example, AVA found that the packaging of essential supplies could be better configured, to facilitate easy retrieval of the items when required.



5 AVA's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Tan Poh Hong, stressed the importance of continuous vigilance against bird flu, "The possible incursion of bird flu into Singapore is a serious matter. We place great importance on being prepared. Recent

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bird flu outbreaks in the region bring the threat closer to home. We must be able to respond swiftly should bird flu hit us. This is why we have been testing different aspects of our operational readiness plans since our first exercise in 2002. These exercises ensure that everyone involved is up to date and familiar with these plans. I would like to thank all participants involved in today's exercise – staff from ST Logistics, our local poultry farms, as well as AVA officers.”

**Issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority  
On 23 February 2017**

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Picture	Caption
	<p>All temporary infrastructure, such as the staging tent was set up within the stipulated time frame on site.</p>
	<p>The stockpiled items which were delivered by ST Logistics within the stipulated time frame</p>

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ST Logistics personnel assisting with the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to exercise personnel

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Exercise  
personnel  
helping each  
other don their  
PPEs

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ST Logistics personnel instructing exercise personnel on the correct method of removal for their PPE during the decontamination process

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ST Logistics personnel instructing exercise personnel on the correct method of removal for their goggles during the decontamination process

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## **Fact sheet on AVA's efforts to keep out bird flu**

While Singapore is free from bird flu, it is endemic in the region. Thus, AVA remains vigilant to safeguard Singapore from bird flu. To this end, AVA has adopted a comprehensive and integrated animal health and food safety system including source accreditation, import control, routine inspection and surveillance at points of entry, local farms, poultry slaughterhouses, wild birds and pet shops.

### **Monitoring of import of poultry and ornamental birds**

2 To ensure food safety, meat and eggs, and their products (including live poultry) can only be imported from accredited establishments in approved countries. Only poultry and poultry products from bird flu-free zones are allowed. The accreditation process involves reviewing the country regulations, the food establishments' production systems and practices to ensure compliance with international animal health and food safety standards.

3 Upon arrival, all live poultry and egg consignments are subjected to inspection and sampling at points-of-entry as part of our routine surveillance and inspection programme to verify that supply farms are free from bird flu, as well as to ensure that they are safe for consumption.

4 Ornamental birds can only be imported from bird flu-free countries, and must undergo a 21-day pre-export isolation in the country of export. The birds must be tested free from bird flu before import. Upon arrival in Singapore, the birds are checked again for clinical signs of diseases, and samples are taken to be tested for bird flu, amongst other diseases.

### **Monitoring of local farms and poultry slaughterhouses, pet shops and wild birds**

5 Local poultry slaughterhouses (PSHs) and farms (poultry and ornamental birds) are licensed by AVA. As part of our routine surveillance programme, these establishments are closely monitored, regularly inspected and sampled to ensure compliance with our food safety standards and requirements. Samples from these establishments are tested by AVA for a wide range of diseases and threats such as avian influenza, microbes and chemicals.

6 Farms are required to ensure that biosecurity measures, such as disinfection and bird-proofing of bird sheds, are in place. As an added precaution, members of the public are not allowed to visit these establishments.

7 PSHs are required to enhance bio-security measures, which include informing AVA of high mortality in their poultry consignments, disinfecting all vehicles at the premise's entrance, implementing measures to keep wild birds away from the premise and keeping a proper registry of daily movement of people and vehicles into and out of the premise. In addition, PSHs are required to adopt a trace-back system to ensure

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that imported live poultry can be traced back to the source and poultry meat distributed can be withdrawn when required.

8 For pet shops that sell birds, inspections are regularly carried out by AVA. During these inspections, samples are taken to test for bird flu. AVA officers would also look for signs of clinical disease and check documentation for traceability.

9 In addition, AVA has a surveillance programme in place for wild birds in the wetlands reserves (Pulau Ubin and Sungei Buloh) and public parks, such as the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Samples are collected from wild birds to test for bird flu. So far, no bird flu has been detected.

**Singapore is free from bird flu**

10 Singapore is free from bird flu. AVA will continue to maintain vigilance and monitor the situation closely.

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