



AVA HAS MEASURES IN PLACE TO PREVENT INCURSION OF BIRD FLU

Issued on 12 April 2013

1. Singapore is currently free from avian influenza (commonly known as bird flu). The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) has precautionary measures in place to keep the disease out of Singapore.
2. In light of recent reports of the influenza A (H7N9) situation in eastern China, AVA has stepped up our monitoring and surveillance.
3. Since 2004, with the emergence of bird flu in the region, AVA has in place a surveillance and monitoring programme. The H7 avian influenza virus has not been detected in our tests on local and imported birds.

Monitoring of import of poultry and birds

4. To ensure food safety, meat and meat products, including live poultry, can only be imported from accredited establishments/farms in approved countries which comply with bio-security requirements. Only poultry and poultry products from bird flu-free zones are allowed. No poultry from China have been allowed for import since 2004. Only processed poultry products, which have been heat-treated to eliminate bird flu virus, are allowed to be imported from accredited establishments in mainland China.
5. As part of our routine surveillance and inspection programme, AVA regularly monitors and samples imported poultry and eggs at points of entry to verify that supply farms are free from bird flu as well as to ensure that they are safe for consumption.

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6. 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 for bird flu, amongst other diseases.

Monitoring of local poultry farms and birds

7. Local poultry slaughterhouses, poultry farms and ornamental bird farms are also closely monitored. Farms are required to ensure that biosecurity measures, such as disinfection and bird-proofing of bird sheds, are in place. As an added precaution, the public are not allowed to visit local poultry farms.

8. AVA conducts regular inspections at all pet shops that sell birds. 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.

Singapore is free from bird flu

10. AVA assures the public that poultry and poultry imports sold in Singapore are safe for consumption. AVA will continue to maintain vigilance and monitor the situation closely.

11. FAQs on bird flu can be found on www.gov.sg/h7n9.

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