



AVA'S BIRD FLU EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE A SUCCESS

Issued on 17 July 2013

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority's (AVA) seventh 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 17 July 2013.

2 Code-named "Exercise Gallus VII", the exercise comprised two parts – a table top exercise on 15 July to test AVA's crisis management framework, and a field exercise on 17 July to test operational readiness in responding to an outbreak of bird flu Singapore.

3 The field exercise simulated a detection of bird flu at a local poultry slaughterhouse and involved about 100 personnel from AVA and Soonly Food Processing Industries Pte Ltd.

4 The key objectives of Exercise Gallus VII were met. Through the table top exercise, we were able to refresh and refine our plans and systems. Through the field exercise, we ascertained that our contingency plans for poultry slaughterhouses were robust and efficient.

5 The field exercise helped AVA and the poultry slaughterhouse workers put into practice the contingency plans to deal with a bird flu outbreak in a local poultry slaughterhouse. Staff involved in the field exercise was able to equip themselves with personal protective equipment (PPE) in an appropriate and timely manner. However, we note that continuous supervision is needed to ensure that the workers use their PPE appropriately throughout the operations.

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6 The culling, carcass disposal and incineration process was carried out smoothly. The cleaning and disinfection processes of vehicles and crates used during the exercise were efficiently conducted. However, effectiveness of decontamination can be further improved through better site assessments during the planning stage to ensure that decontamination is not hampered by space constraints. For example, the delivery trucks can be placed further away from the loading platform to allow complete decontamination.

7 AVA's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Tan Poh Hong, stressed the need for continuous vigilance to safeguard Singapore from bird flu. "Singapore is free of bird flu. AVA has been regularly reviewing and testing our contingency plans and operations to ensure robustness so that we are prepared when bird flu strikes. However, it is not enough if only the government is prepared. Cooperation between AVA and the industry is essential in managing a bird flu outbreak in Singapore. We thank Soonly Food Processing Industries for their cooperation in this field exercise. We are encouraged by the conclusion of Exercise Gallus VII and will continue to strengthen our links with the industry as a vanguard against future emergencies," said Ms Tan.

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