

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI):

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENTS FOR POULTRY FARM WORKERS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Avian influenza is a highly contagious disease of birds, whereby exposure to infected poultry and their faeces or dust/soil contaminated with faeces can result in human infection. Within a country, the disease can spread easily from farm to farm.

It must be stressed that general standard precautions must be used as well as a high level of hygiene practiced at all times. This includes:

- Rigorous and frequent hand washing and antiseptics (hand hygiene);
- Use of personal protective equipment when handling chickens, excretions, secretions etc;
- Appropriate disinfection procedures (including for decontamination of environment) and handling of waste.

2. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

By virtue of the nature of their work, all poultry farm workers must be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment appropriate to the nature of their work. However, in the event that there are suspected cases of or outbreak of HPAI, all poultry farm workers must be supplied with the following personal protective equipment:

- √ Protective clothing, preferably coveralls plus an impermeable apron,
- √ Heavy duty rubber or polyurethane boots that can be disinfected or protective foot covers that can be discarded
- √ Single use N95 (or equivalent specification) masks - ensure fitted correctly
- √ Protective eyewear/goggles that can be decontaminated
- √ Heavy duty rubber work gloves that can be disinfected
- √ Disposable cap or head cover

If the above items are not immediately available, improvise as much as possible:

- √ Cloth around the mouth and nose
- √ plastic bags to cover the hands and shoes
- √ overalls that can be washed

3. OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- √ In the event of an outbreak or there are suspected cases of HPAI in the country, all farm workers are advised to be vaccinated with the current WHO recommended influenza vaccine. They are also recommended to take antiviral prophylaxis- Oseltamivir phosphate (Tamiflu).
- √ Always practice a high level of hygiene at all times- always wash hands after every procedure, removal of personal protective equipment and after handling equipment.
- √ Take care not to recontaminate yourself after removal of personal protective equipment.
- √ Shower if possible after every shift/procedure.
- √ Any items that can be used again such as rubber gloves or boots should be washed very well in soap/detergent and water. Wash twice to ensure the items are clean.
- √ Wash clothes worn after each working day thoroughly- use detergent and hot or warm water. Dry clothes in the sun.
- √ Check temperatures daily. Keep a personal diary of contacts. In the event of developing fever, limit contacts and seek medical advise.

Reference:

WHO Interim Recommendations for The protection of Persons involved In The Mass Slaughter of Animals Infected with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Viruses; WHO WPRO Document 26th January 2004

Guidelines for the Use of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine in Humans at Risk Of H5N1 Infection; WHO Document