

# Pandemic Postings

Current Alert Level: **WHITE** ([definition](#))  
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## International

16 countries report their first cases of avian influenza in February [CIDRAP, 24/02/06](#). Thus far, February 2006 has seen 16 countries report their first cases of H5N1 avian influenza in birds. The most recent country to report its first case of H5N1 was Georgia; countries that had earlier reported their first cases were Iraq, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Iran, Austria, Germany, Egypt, India, France, Hungary and Slovakia. Although all these countries have confirmed H5N1 incursions, most are among wild birds (not poultry) and only one country, Iraq, has an associated human case. In addition to these countries, Switzerland has reported the finding of H5 in a wild duck in Geneva; results of tests for H5N1 are awaited. Details for selected countries reporting H5N1 are as follows (grouped by continent).

### Africa

**Nigeria** [WHO, 22/02/06](#). Avian influenza outbreaks in poultry first reported 8 Feb in Kaduna state, poultry outbreaks subsequently identified in four surrounding states. Cases of respiratory disease in humans, including one death, have been investigated for influenza A/H5N1 but none have yet been confirmed.

**Egypt** [WHO, 21/02/06](#). Outbreaks in poultry first reported 18 Feb, now confirmed in 10 governorates (administrative divisions) including Cairo and Giza.

### Central and Southern Asia

**India** [WHO, 23/02/06](#). HPAI outbreaks in poultry first reported 18/02/06 from Maharashtra state. 15 patients hospitalised under observation for fever and respiratory illness; none have yet been confirmed with A/H5N1.

**Iraq** [WHO, 17/02/06](#). Two human fatalities reported due to A/H5N1 infection; the second case (a relative of the first) remains unconfirmed. Human-to-human transmission has been excluded by the WHO. A/H5N1 outbreaks among poultry in the same province (Sulaimaniyah) reported on 9 Feb.

**Iran** [OIE, 16/02/06](#). Confirmation in swans, Rasht region.

**Azerbaijan** [OIE, 16/02/06](#). A/H5N1 confirmed in various migratory bird species in coastal area around Baku.

### Europe

**France** [NZ Herald, 26/02/06](#). Thousands of deaths of turkeys on a farm in Ain département, eastern France, have been confirmed to be due to influenza A/H5N1. Isolates from the farm were reported as being "99% homologous" to those identified from wild ducks found in the same area, reported 20 Feb. All remaining turkeys on the farm have been slaughtered. Japan has banned imports of poultry meat and poultry products from France in response to the finding.

Identifications of avian H5N1 in other countries of Europe have almost universally been among swans. Countries reporting H5N1 in swans have been **Bulgaria** (Vidin, 12 Feb), **Germany** (Rügen Island, 16 Feb), **Greece** (Central Macedonia, 16 Feb), **Slovenia** (Podravska region, 16 Feb), **Austria** (Graz-Umgebung district, 20 Feb), **Hungary** (Nagybaracska region, 21 Feb), **Italy** (Puglia, Calabria and Sicily, 22 Feb) and **Georgia** (Adjara, 24 Feb). Other wild bird species affected include a duck and a falcon in **Slovakia** (Bratislava, 23 Feb), wild geese in Greece and a goshawk in Germany. None of these countries have reported poultry outbreaks.

**Global spread of avian influenza to date**  
 Confirmed human cases of avian influenza A/(H5N1), to 20 February 2006,<sup>1</sup> and outbreaks of highly-pathogenic avian influenza A/H5 in poultry, to 23 February 2006<sup>2</sup>

	Human <sup>1</sup>		Poultry <sup>2</sup>
	cases	deaths	outbreaks
Cambodia	4	4	14
China	12	8	79
Indonesia	26	19	209
Iraq	1	1	3
Japan	-	-	7
Kazakhstan	-	-	1
Korea (South)	-	-	19
Laos	-	-	1
Malaysia	-	-	10
Nigeria	-	-	6
Romania	-	-	38
Russia	-	-	121
Taiwan	-	-	2
Thailand	22	14	1078
Turkey	12	4	98
Ukraine	-	-	22
Vietnam	93	42	2312
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>4020</b>

### Notes:

- 1 As reported to [World Health Organization](#)
- 2 As reported to [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#)

**OIE changes reporting of animal outbreaks:** Please note that the above table now presents numbers of influenza A/H5 outbreaks in poultry, excluding outbreaks in other animals, in contrast to previous editions of Pandemic Postings. This is in accordance to changes to aggregated reporting of animal A/H5 outbreaks by the OIE, the source of data for this table.

## Background

**Updated WHO avian influenza timeline available** [WHO, 15/02/06](#). The WHO chronologic summary of key events in the spread of the H5N1 avian influenza panzootic, and accompanying illness among humans, has been updated to 15 February 2006.

**WHO commentary on significance of mutations in A/H5N1** [WHO, 20/02/06](#). A paper recently posted on the WHO website summarises the current state of knowledge about mutations to the A/H5N1 virus, and comments on media speculation that these mutations may have increased likelihood of a pandemic. The paper states that mutations found in isolates from human cases in Turkey were transient and did not become fixed in the circulating viruses, and their role in transmission is not understood. Scientists do not know which specific mutations are necessary to turn A/H5N1 into a pandemic virus, underscoring the importance of close surveillance and thorough investigation of all outbreaks involving humans.

[Links](#) to pandemic planning sites NZ/worldwide

[Ministry of Education](#) pandemic planning site for schools and early childhood education services (updated 09/01/06)

[Emerging Infectious Diseases special issue on influenza \(January 2006\)](#)

Updated [CIDRAP \(University of Minnesota\)](#)-authored overviews of avian influenza [implications for humans](#) and [agricultural and wildlife considerations](#) are available online.