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**AVIAN INFLUENZA IN HONG KONG (SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA)**

Information dated 23 December 1997 taken from the Web site of the World Health Organization (WHO), at the following address: <http://www.who.ch/programmes/emc/flu/country.htm>

A few sporadic cases* of influenza A(H1N1), A(H3N2) and influenza B were reported in September and October. Up to 23 December nine cases of influenza A(H5N1) had been confirmed and three suspected cases were under investigation. Three were fatal, one confirmed and one suspected case were seriously ill, while the remainder had a milder illness or had fully recovered. Contact with poultry has been established in two cases whereas the source of infection is unclear for the other confirmed cases. See also information posted on Hong Kong's web page:

<http://www.info.gov.hk/dh/new/index.htm>

Information dated 23 December 1997 taken from the Web site of the WHO, at the following address: <http://www.who.ch/programmes/emc/news.htm>

In the absence of any sign of human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 influenza virus, no new measures, such as travel restrictions or quarantine, are warranted, the WHO stressed today.

The H5N1 virus, formerly found only in fowl, has been identified as the cause of nine confirmed cases of influenza in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China, since May. Three of these cases have been fatal. There are an additional three suspected cases currently under investigation. This number is likely to increase slowly in coming weeks due to the enhanced surveillance activities now in progress.

Detection of new cases is probably the result of very comprehensive surveillance rather than an indication of increased transmission. The Department of Health in Hong Kong has stepped up its monitoring and surveillance activities. In addition to all hospitals and clinics in Hong Kong, a selected number of general practitioners are also now part of the surveillance system.

"The cases so far isolated come from all parts of Hong Kong and there is still no definite sign of human-to-human transmission. The cluster of cases which has been observed within a family does appear to have a common source and we are working to identify that", said Dr Daniel Lavanchy of WHO's Division of Emerging and other Communicable Diseases Control and Surveillance (EMC).

It is evident that the virus transmits poorly. WHO will continue to assist the authorities of Hong Kong in the surveillance and the search for any evidence of the infection in live chickens, and other animals such as rats, mice, dogs, cats and other domestic and wild birds, in Hong Kong and the vicinity.

* Note by the OIE Central Bureau: cases referred to in this text from the WHO are human cases.

There is still no indication that a vaccine is needed but laboratory work is in progress in the WHO Collaborating Centres to produce a seed virus which would be suitable for vaccine production should this become necessary.

Note by the OIE Central Bureau:

To date, no reports of any exceptional epidemiological events in poultry due to influenza virus H5N1 have been received from any OIE Member Countries.

For more general information on highly pathogenic avian influenza, Delegates of Member Countries should refer to the information sheet on the disease sent to them at the beginning of 1997 and the relevant chapter of the *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines* and the *International Animal Health Code*.

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RINDERPEST IN BURKINA FASO
The Minister of Animal Resources declares the country "provisionally free" from the disease

Translation of a communication received on 29 December 1997 from Professor Alassane Sere, Minister of Animal Resources, Ouagadougou:

Burkina Faso declares itself "provisionally free" from rinderpest. No outbreaks of the disease have been recorded in the country since June 1988. Vaccination against rinderpest has not been practised in Burkina Faso since 1 January 1997 and, since June 1997, no doses of heterologous vaccine have been used to vaccinate against peste des petits ruminants.

While continuing to carry out serological testing, Burkina Faso is deploying an epidemiological surveillance network for rinderpest. The network includes the following:

- organisation of the country's Veterinary Services around 12 regions comprising 45 provincial Veterinary Services and 230 livestock posts. This organisation also includes 60 veterinarians in private practice;
- 25 active surveillance posts linked to 4 regional laboratories attached to the National Livestock Laboratory. The officers in charge of these surveillance posts have already undergone training in clinical diagnosis of animal diseases (for which epidemiological surveillance is carried out), sampling techniques and delivery of samples to the Laboratory.

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NEWCASTLE DISEASE IN AUSTRIA

Emergency report

Text of a fax received on 30 December 1997 from Dr P. Weber, Chief Veterinary Officer, Ministry of Health, Sports and Consumer Protection, Vienna:

Nature of diagnosis: laboratory.

Date of initial detection of animal health incident: 13 November 1997.

Estimated date of first infection: 9 November 1997.

<i>Location</i>	<i>No. of outbreaks</i>
St. Oswald, Freistadt, Lower Austria Federal Province	1

Description of affected population: hobby flock with 220 pigeons, 20 bantams, 10 turkeys, 7 quails, 5 geese and 1 duck.

Total number of animals in the outbreak:

<i>susceptible</i>	<i>cases</i>	<i>deaths</i>	<i>destroyed</i>	<i>slaughtered</i>
163	100*	100*	0	0

* pigeons.

Diagnosis:

A. Laboratory where diagnosis was made: Federal Institute for the Control of Animal Virus Diseases, Vienna.

B. Diagnostic tests used: virus isolation.

Source of agent / origin of infection: unknown.

Control measures during reporting period: measures in accordance with European Directive No. 92/66/EEC. Confinement of the remaining birds for 60 days after the disappearance of all clinical signs.

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CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Emergency report

Text of a fax received on 31 December 1997 from Dr J.M. Arnoldi, Deputy Administrator, Veterinary Services, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC:

Nature of diagnosis: laboratory (during testing for clearance to export semen).

Date of initial detection of animal health incident: 24 December 1997.

Estimated date of first infection: 24 November 1997.

<i>Location</i>	<i>No. of outbreaks</i>
Sacramento County, State of California	1

Description of affected population: 11-year-old donkey jack.

Total number of animals in the outbreak:

<i>susceptible</i>	<i>cases</i>	<i>deaths</i>	<i>destroyed</i>	<i>slaughtered</i>
21	1	0	0	0

Diagnosis:

- A. **Laboratory where diagnosis was made:** National Veterinary Services Laboratory, Ames, Iowa.
- B. **Diagnostic tests used:** culture from the urethra; fluorescent antibody test.
- C. **Causal agent:** further characterisation of the isolate of *Taylorella equigenitalis* will be performed to compare it to organisms that have caused clinical disease.

Epidemiology:

- A. **Source of agent / origin of infection:** unknown at this time. Suspect contaminated AI* sleeve or infected prior to becoming a semen donor. Epidemiology being performed. Animals identified in trace-outs and trace-backs will be tested for contagious equine metritis.
- B. **Other epidemiological details:** the donkey was born and raised in the United States and has never been out of the country. It has been with the current owner since it was a yearling. This was the first test for contagious equine metritis this animal has ever had. Four other animals in the same export quarantine area were tested for contagious equine metritis and found to be negative.

The donkey has not been used for natural breeding for three years. There is no clinical disease in the donkey or any other animal on the farm nor any reports of clinical diseases of mares this donkey has serviced (naturally or artificially).

Control measures during reporting period: the donkey and the premises where the donkey resides have been under quarantine by the State of California since 12 December 1997. The donkey will be treated in accordance with standard treatment procedure for contagious equine metritis.

* AI: artificial insemination.

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