

# Poultryhealth BYTES

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## Avian influenza IX

Your own reference source on poultry health



### International markets

Outbreaks of avian influenza can add a new degree of instability to already volatile markets in poultry products. Substantial effects in terms of shifts in price, volumes and location, driven by a fall in egg and meat consumption, often occur.

In early 2005 restrictions on exports from Asian countries, as a consequence of avian influenza outbreaks, resulted in a 20% increase in international prices of poultry products and consumers switching to other protein sources. Many countries banned importation of non-cooked poultry products from countries like China and Thailand. At the same time, the prices of domestic poultry products fell because of depressed demand and product that should have been exported was dumped domestically. Commercial breeders were culled in an attempt to balance supply and demand.

Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, informal trade occurs across international borders.

Typically, following the first outbreak in a country price drops are exaggerated by dramatic announcements by government officials and in the local media. This is often accompanied by little or poor information on appropriate risk avoidance behaviour.

### Livelihoods

Another consequence of avian influenza is people become worried about their livelihoods (livelihood insecurity). People in very poor areas are more likely to sell than consume the poultry products they have produced – in such areas an influenza outbreak can have far greater consequences on the local community. Also, income from the sale of poultry products is far more likely to go to the women and, therefore, benefit child nutrition.

### Reporting of outbreaks

The sooner an outbreak is reported, the less it will spread. Thus, a poultry industry based on many small producers who market their own products is very hard to manage in terms of avian influenza control.

A good reporting (and control) system requires:

- Farmer awareness of the disease reporting pathways
- Compulsory disease reporting with legislative back up, enforcement capacity and incentives
- An effective animal health information system
- Adequately equipped laboratories and competent staff
- Movement controls
- Culling with compensation

