

Avian Influenza Hits Mexico
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Mexican agricultural officials have announced that a pathogenic strain of H5N2 avian influenza has been diagnosed in commercial poultry in four states in central Mexico, viz., Hidalgo, Jalisco, Puebla, and Queretaro. Following the diagnosis, Mexican officials announced a National Declaration of Emergency on January 23, 1995. On February 5, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sent an evaluation team to Mexico to obtain an overview of the outbreak. Mexican animal health brigades are restricting poultry movement from known areas of infection. Control efforts are being directed toward enhanced surveillance, vaccination, and quarantine of infected premises. The Mexican government is distributing approved vaccines to assist this effort.

The USDA is increasing vigilance for avian influenza to protect our poultry industry from this economically significant disease. Increased slaughter and on-farm disease surveillance activities are being implemented for poultry states bordering Mexico and other areas that might be at risk. Plans are being made to react quickly if an outbreak is detected in the United States. Awareness of this threat is essential. Dr. Donald W. Luchsinger, Acting Deputy Administrator for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, stated:

"It is vital that the U.S. poultry industry assist our efforts to keep highly pathogenic avian influenza out of the country by maintaining the strictest biosecurity program possible."