



SUCCESS STORY

Campaign Keeps Avian Flu at Bay

Education and vaccines effective in shielding chickens from bird virus



Photo: CRS

An avian flu project has made Aby Sadji, holding one of her brood, more knowledgeable on protecting her chickens from disease.

“Now my chickens are healthier and not as many have died. Before, for every 10 chicks hatched, only three survived. Now, nine out of 10 survive to maturity,” said Aby Sadji, who raises chickens in Senegal.

Telling Our Story
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As a child, Aby Sadji loved the sea. She is still connected to the sea, living with her fisherman husband and spending much of her time in Guéréo, one of the many villages surrounding Somone Lagoon. But she has a new love these days: chickens.

Aby has been raising chickens ever since she joined her husband in Guéréo over 15 years ago. She has a brood of three hens and 11 chicks, which she used to let range freely. But thanks to a USAID-sponsored avian flu awareness-raising session organized by an implementing partner, Aby now keeps them in an abandoned kitchen, away from contact with wild birds, cats and other predators.

Guéréo, in the Mbour department’s Ngékhokh district, is the meeting point of the sea and the river, attracting thousands of birds migrating from Europe and Asia annually. From September to May, they make their homes around the numerous ponds on the reserve, resting and reproducing. These migratory birds could also be a risk of avian flu infection, which is another reason why the Senegalese government is taking the matter seriously.

The USAID-financed avian influenza project supports the Senegalese government to implement its national plan. This plan identified Guéréo, and several villages around Somone Lagoon, as potential entry points for the H5N1 virus, commonly referred to as the bird flu.

In the past, many of Aby’s chickens died of disease. Today, thanks to the project, Aby knows about medical prophylaxis and how to monitor the health of her poultry. She also knows about vaccinations; all her hens have been vaccinated against Newcastle disease, a major killer among poultry. “Now my chickens are healthier and not as many have died. Before, for every 10 chicks hatched, only three survived. Now, nine out of 10 survive to maturity.” After many years of poultry rearing, Aby has enough hens to sell them at the market for \$5.50 each.