

ORDER OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION,

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ACTION: Amendment of February 4, 2004, order to embargo birds and bird products imported from Afghanistan

SUMMARY: On February 4, 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued an order to ban immediately the import of all birds (Class: *Aves*) from specified countries, subject to limited exemptions for returning pet birds of U.S. origin and certain processed bird-derived products. HHS/CDC took this step because birds from these countries potentially can infect humans with avian influenza (influenza A/ [H5N1]). The February 4, 2004, order complemented a similar action taken at the same time by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

On March 10, 2004, HHS/CDC lifted the embargo of birds and bird products from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) because of the documented public-health and animal health measures taken by Hong Kong officials to prevent spread of the outbreak within the HKSAR, and the absence of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 cases in Hong Kong's domestic and wild bird populations. USDA/APHIS took a similar action. On September 28, 2004, HHS/CDC extended the embargo on birds and bird products to include Malaysia because of the documented cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza A H5N1 in poultry in Malaysia. On July 20, 2005, USDA/APHIS adopted as a final rule the interim rule that became effective on February 4, 2004, which amended its

regulations to prohibit or restrict the importation of birds, poultry, and unprocessed birds and poultry products from regions that have reported the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in poultry. (See 70 *Federal Register* 41608 [July 20, 2005].) As the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) have confirmed additional cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1), USDA/APHIS has added additional countries to its ban. Because of the documentation of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in poultry, HHS/CDC added the following countries to its embargo: Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine on December 29, 2005; Nigeria on February 8, 2006; India on February 22, 2006; Egypt on February 27, 2006; Niger on March 2, 2006; Albania, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, and Burma (Myanmar) on March 15, 2006; and Israel on March 20, 2006.

On March 15, 2006, OIE reported confirmation of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in poultry in Afghanistan. At this time, HHS/CDC is adding Afghanistan to its current embargo. This action is effective on March 21, 2006, and will remain in effect until further notice.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

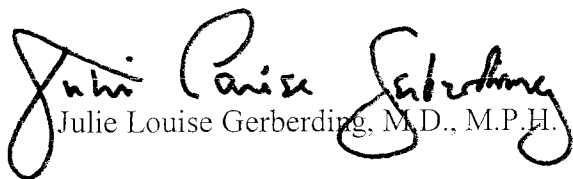
Background

On March 15, 2006, OIE reported confirmation of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in chickens and turkeys in five provinces of Afghanistan, including Jalalabad, Kabul, Laghman, Vardak and Kunar.

Introduction of birds infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 into the United States could lead to outbreaks of disease among birds and among the human population, a significant public health threat. Banning the importation of all avian species from affected countries is an effective means of limiting this threat. HHS/CDC is therefore taking this action to reduce the likelihood of introduction or spread of influenza A H5N1 into the United States.

Immediate Action

Therefore, pursuant to 42 CFR 71.32(b), HHS/CDC is amending the February 4, 2004, order to add Afghanistan to the list of countries subject to the order's embargo of birds and products derived from birds. All other portions of the February 4, 2004, order, as further amended on March 10, 2004, September 28, 2004, December 29, 2005, February 8, 2006, February 22, 2006, February 27, 2006, March 2, 2006, March 15, 2006, and March 20, 2006, shall remain in effect until further notice.


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