

Avian influenza: why strong public policies are vital

Causing severe, systematic disease in domestic and wild birds, avian influenza outbreaks have a significant impact on jobs, livelihoods, trade and the economy.

Good public policy, including well-resourced Veterinary Services, are key to managing the disease.

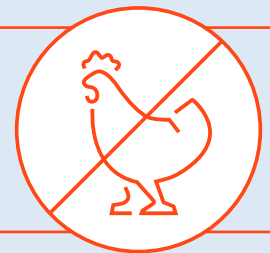


Tackling avian influenza is essential for society

A threat to animal health leading to:

- death of infected and exposed birds
- decreased animal welfare
- large die-offs of wild birds, posing a threat to biodiversity

Mortality rates within poultry flocks are often **up to 100%**



A socioeconomic impact triggering:

- major financial impact for farmers and significant job losses in the whole poultry production chain
- a drop in poultry production and associated products
- heightened prices of poultry meat and products
- potential reduction in travel and tourism in affected areas

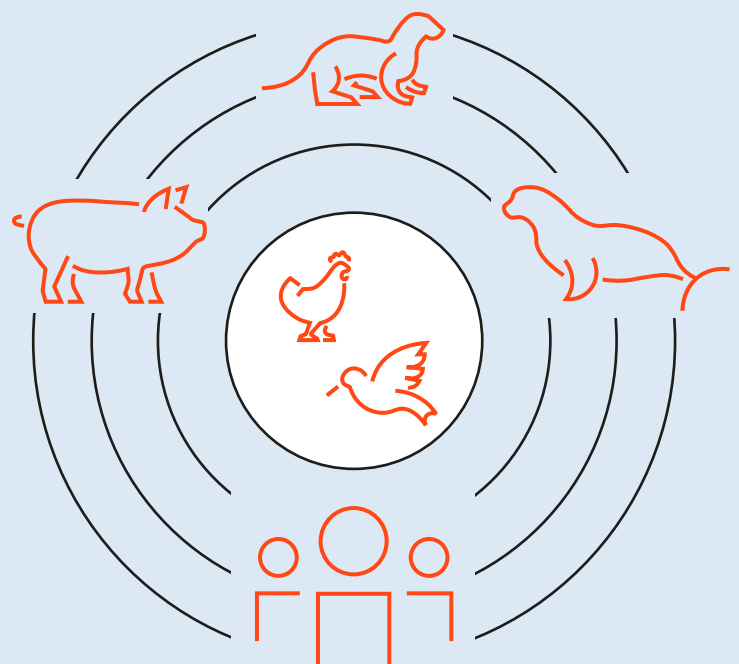
Food security and international trade are **heavily impacted**



Public health is also at risk.

Occasionally, avian influenza has crossed the species barrier and has infected humans, causing severe symptoms and mortality.

More recently, the disease has spread to land and sea mammals, suggesting that avian influenza viruses are becoming more adapted to mammals, including humans.



The role of policy-makers

Policy-makers have the responsibility to support national Veterinary Services in the fight against avian influenza. Several key actions should be taken:

Investing in strong and resilient animal health systems is critical in overcoming the challenges relating to avian influenza and in preventing the disease from spreading. Building the capacity of the veterinary workforce is a necessary step which requires:



Adequate financial resources



Sufficient human resources



Quality training of the veterinary workforce

Promoting collaboration across sectors using a One Health approach is essential for stopping the spread of the disease

Raising awareness of avian influenza among key stakeholders

Encouraging poultry farmers to take responsibility including through compensation schemes for farmers who have lost their animals as a result of mandatory culling. These incentives encourage farmers to participate in early detection measures and in the transparent reporting of animal disease occurrences



Controlling avian influenza is key to improving animal health and welfare, safeguarding livelihoods and reducing the risks to public health, thereby ensuring a better future for us all.

Discover our resources



Regular situation reports to follow the disease evolution



The WAHIS system and its distribution list to share the latest disease notifications



WOAH science-based standards on avian influenza to help frame national legislations



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

www.woah.org