

Taiwan reports more H5N6 bird flu cases

Taiwan has reported three H5N6 bird flu cases this week, and authorities are reinforcing measures to prevent further infections.

The latest case was reported Sunday when turkeys from a farm in Tainan city were confirmed as infected with the virus, according to Taiwan's animal and plant inspection authority.

More than 3,000 turkeys on the farm died in an unusually short space of time before the authority conducted tests to confirm the virus.

The first H5N6 case was confirmed Feb. 5 in a dead goose found on a farm road in eastern Hualien county. On Feb. 11, samples from 3,789 slaughtered ducks, from a farm near where the gosling was found, also tested positive for the virus.

The authority said that the virus' DNA sequence was 99 percent the same as a similar virus found in the Republic of Korea and Japan, where more than 35 million fowl have been culled in three months.

Taiwan is a common destination for migrating birds to spend the winter. Its farms have reported 13 avian flu cases this year, though mainly caused by the H5N2 or H5N8 virus.

The island has urged farms to reinforce safety checks and speedily report the unusual death of animals, threatening heavy fines for farms that attempt to cover-up any outbreaks.

China steps up human H7N9 avian flu prevention

A number of provinces in China have stepped up efforts to prevent H7N9 avian flu following reports of scattered human cases of the virus.

Authorities closed 280 live poultry trading and slaughtering venues in Suining city, southwest China's Sichuan Province, after four human H7N9 cases were reported in the city this year, according to the provincial health authorities.

Commerce officials in Suining have enhanced inspections to crack down on unlicensed poultry businesses.

The central province of Hubei has set up headquarters for the prevention and control of human H7N9 outbreak, according to the provincial Health and Family Planning Commission.

Hubei confirmed 19 human H7N9 cases from Jan.1 to Feb. 9, scattered across several cities. Two patients have been discharged from hospital after recovering. The province has dispatched 16 inspection teams to check on prevention efforts.

In Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province, all live poultry markets have been suspended. The province has reported 24 H7N9 cases, including five fatalities, this year.

Eastern China's Zhejiang Province ordered all markets across the province to halt live poultry trading by 6 p.m. Saturday, over bird flu concerns.

Staff with the Zhejiang Center for Disease Control and Prevention said that the province had entered a high season of bird flu outbreak.

In January alone, Zhejiang reported 35 infections of the H7N9 strain of bird flu. Contact with live poultry is the major source of infection, particularly in rural areas.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in China in March 2013. It is most likely to strike in winter and spring.

Beijing on Saturday reported a human H7N9 case. The patient is a 68-year-old man from Langfang city in neighboring Hebei Province.

Liaoning, Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan, Guangdong and Guizhou provinces have all reported human H7N9 cases this year.

[Sir Robert Francis' message is clear: the funding crisis in the NHS is putting patient care at risk – Ashworth](#)

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, responding to Sir Robert Francis' comments on the Andrew Marr Show this morning, said:

"Sir Robert Francis' message is clear: the funding crisis in the NHS is putting patient care at risk. The NHS should be the safest and best in the world, but Sir Robert's warning is that this cannot be achieved given the scale of the financial

crisis

now engulfing hospital departments up and down the country.

"The Tories' behaviour to date has been to blame patients and doctors for the pressures facing the NHS. But the truth is that the cause of this crisis lies squarely at the feet of The Prime Minister. Theresa May must immediately agree to bring forward a comprehensive funding package for health and social care in the March Budget so no patients are put a risk of harm or unsafe care."

Police Community Surgeries in the West End

I am pleased that Police Scotland is now running community surgeries in the West End.

The surgeries at Blackness Library start tomorrow – see below :

Community Surgeries to be held 2nd Monday of every month from 1-4pm in the Blackness Library Blackness Avenue, Dundee

Come and discuss issues that
matter to you in your community
with your local police officers.



2017 Dates: 13th Feb, 13th March, 10th April, 8th May, 12th June,
10th July, 14th Aug, 11th Sept, 9th Oct, 13th Nov, 11th Dec.

Have a chat over a cup of tea



Advice, information, provide an opportunity for
members of the public to come along and speak
to police officers in relation to issues that affect
them in their community



There are also surgeries at the Mitchell Street Centre (first Tuesday of each month) – further details available [here](#).

[Beijingers buy less fireworks during Spring Festival](#)

Beijing saw a 30.5 percent fall in fireworks and firecracker sales during Spring Festival compared to last year, mainly due to pollution concerns,

according to municipal authorities Sunday.

It is the sixth consecutive annual decline since 2012, according to the fireworks office of the municipal government. Firework-caused fires and injuries also dropped in the capital.

Spring Festival is the most important festival in the Chinese calendar. This year it fell on Jan. 28, the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year.

The main celebration period traditionally lasts from the New Year's Eve to the 15th day of the first lunar month, or Lantern Festival.

Since Sunday, Beijing resumed its fireworks ban within the fifth ring road.

Nationwide, 444 cities have banned fireworks and 764 other cities imposed fireworks restrictions.