

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.