

avian influenza virus caused pandemics in many countries in the world. The 1918-1919 great influenza pandemic killed nearly 40 million people within a short period of time.

Since late 2003, the H5N1 avian influenza epidemic has emerged in many countries and territories, including Vietnam. According to the warnings of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the world is facing the danger of the outbreak of an avian influenza epidemic and a type-A (H5N1) human influenza pandemic.

In Vietnam, the H5N1 avian influenza and type-A human influenza epidemics have broken out three times, resulting in the cull of nearly 50 million fowls and the death of 41 people out of 91 infected people. At present, there is no vaccine or any specific medicine for prevention of the H5N1 type-A influenza among humans. The antiviral drug Tamiflu for H5N1 type-A influenza prevention and treatment has an unclear effect and must be used under physician's prescriptions. The drug cannot be produced in Vietnam yet, are expensive and in short supply. A pandemic might break out unless everybody strictly follows the epidemic prevention and control regulations issued by the health and the animal health sectors.

THE GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION No. 15/2005/NQ-CP OF NOVEMBER 4, 2005, ON URGENT MEASURES TO PREVENT THE AVIAN INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC (H5N1) AND TYPE-A (H5N1) HUMAN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

I. EVALUATION OF AVIAN INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC SITUATION

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a dangerous contagious disease. In the history, the

II. A NUMBER OF URGENT MEASURES

1. To approve an urgent action plan in anticipation of an outbreak of an avian influenza epidemic and a human influenza pandemic. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Health shall coordinate with concerned ministries and branches in consulting the cabinet members to supplement and complete

the plan with more attention paid to such issues as funds, stockpiling of equipment, medicines, supplies and chemicals, and the responsibilities of, and coordination among, ministries, branches and localities for the implementation of the plan.

2. Ministries, branches, People's Committees of all levels, agencies and units shall, basing themselves on this urgent action plan, formulate and implement their own detailed plans of action.

The formulation and implementation of such urgent action plans must be considered an unexpected and urgent task of Party committees and administrations of all levels and a duty of each citizen and, therefore, the strength of the whole political system should be mobilized for this task.

3. To take initiative in making all necessary preparations and mobilizing every resource to prevent and combat the type-A (H5N1) influenza among humans. The Ministry of Health, concerned ministries and branches and localities shall guide all medical units and establishments (even the army and police forces) from the central to provincial, municipal, district and communal levels to prepare forces, specialized equipment and specific preventive measures. At provincial hospitals, all contagious disease departments must prepare beds, rooms, machines, equipment, devices, and medicines for influenza treatment. The preventive medicine system, the Central Hygiene and Epidemiology Institute, and the Central Pasteur Institute should prepare for anti-epidemic drills, stockpile anti-flu medicines, supplies and chemicals, and organize mobile teams to be deployed in case of a pandemic. Provincial-level preventive medicine centers must early detect, isolate and stamp out epidemic focuses, and work out plans to coordinate activities where the first

influenza case is found at the grassroots.

4. To resolutely wipe out any pathogen and prevent the disease from spreading among poultry. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Health, provincial/municipal People's Committees, and concerned ministries and branches shall concentrate all sources, direct and implement in time the following measures:

a/ To strictly apply anti-epidemic measures as requested by the health and animal health sectors and the Party Central Committee Secretariat's Directive No. 53-CT/TW of October 28, 2005, on urgent measures to prevent the avian influenza (H5N1) epidemic and human influenza pandemic; to resolutely and coordinatedly apply bio-safety measures, cleanse and disinfect, conduct vaccinations and apply other measures according to the provisions of law on animal health; to closely monitor the use of vaccines and the situation of the epidemic in households, villages, hamlets, and population clusters and groups. Upon detecting any fowl infected with avian influenza or died for unknown reasons, it is necessary to immediately cull poultry, cleanse, disinfect, control and isolate epidemic focuses, place a ban on the transport of poultry out of epidemic focuses, and apply other preventive measures according to the provisions of law on animal health so as to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

b/ To plan and reorganize concentrated husbandry establishments into industrial ones and poultry rearing, slaughtering and trading establishments, ensuring food hygiene and safety and environmental sanitation. To impose a ban on the rearing of poultry in the inner areas of cities, towns and townships, particularly in Hanoi capital, Ho Chi Minh city, new urban centers and industrial

parks; to restrict the rearing of poultry in areas highly prone to epidemics; to work out policies in support of small poultry raisers, traders and slaughter to switch to other trades or relocate their establishments to planned locations. To guide small-sized poultry-rearing households to apply preventive measures so as to ensure environmental sanitation and community health. To apply resolute measures to protect prototype breeding poultry and precious poultry breeds in localities and centrally-run poultry breeding establishments.

c/ To enhance the work of quarantine, monitor poultry slaughters and check veterinary hygiene of livestock and poultry in order to ensure food safety and hygiene. Not to slaughter, eat or trade in poultry infected with the disease or not yet gone through quarantine as well as products thereof. In the inner areas of cities and towns, only slaughtered or processed poultry are permitted for trading while it is prohibited to trade in live poultry or slaughter poultry at marketplaces or other places in contravention of the provisions of law on animal health.

It is strictly prohibited to prepare and sell dishes from livestock or poultry blood; all cases of violation shall be strictly handled according to the provisions of law on food safety and hygiene.

d/ To suspend the import of poultry (including pet birds), unprocessed poultry products and feathers not yet chemically processed. Smuggled poultry and poultry products must be confiscated and culled while the smugglers shall be strictly handled.

5. The Ministry of Culture and Information and localities shall coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Health, the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations and

mass media in conducting propagation, mobilization and education in a manner suitable to the requirements and contents of epidemic prevention and combat in every village, hamlet, population cluster or group, agency, unit, school and household so as to help people be accurately and fully aware of the danger of the epidemic and its risk of contagion in order to protect themselves and the community and, at the same time, take initiative in joining in anti-epidemic activities.

6. To regularly update information on the developments of the avian influenza epidemic and type A (H5N1) human influenza in the world. To cooperate with and make the best use of the support from foreign countries, international organizations and foreign scientists so as to prevent the epidemic and effectively control it once it occurs.

III. ORGANIZATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health shall have:

a/ To coordinate with ministries, branches and localities in preparing all necessary equipment, supplies, specific medicines, and chemicals to meet the requirements of epidemic prevention and control.

b/ To provide detailed guidance on professional measures for prevention and control of an avian influenza epidemic and human influenza pandemic.

2. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Investment shall have to allocate budgets for implementation.

3. Ministries, branches, Government-attached agencies and provincial/municipal People's Committees shall have to launch anti-epidemic

campaigns within their respective agencies or localities under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and their approved urgent action plans.

4. The National Steering Committee for Prevention of the Avian Influenza, the National Steering Committee for Prevention of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Human Influenza shall regularly oversee the execution of this Resolution by ministries, branches and localities and periodically report thereon to the Prime Minister.

On behalf of the Government

Prime Minister

PHAN VAN KHAI