



FACT SHEET

Avian Influenza: What the Experts Are Saying

"The surveillance is going to be so intense that it is very unlikely that there is going to be the type of situation we see everywhere from Nigeria to Indonesia... It won't be what you see in countries in which there is no regulation, in which there is no incentive to compensate farmers, in which the people, who are so poor, when they see their chickens are getting infected they immediately sell them or they don't tell anybody because they don't want them culled... this is a critical issue that is fundamentally different than what we see in Western Europe and that we will see in the United States."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, NIH's infectious disease chief - Austin American Statesman, April 12, 2006

"Properly prepared poultry is safe to eat. A detection of H5N1 should not cause a loss of confidence in the safety of poultry. It is highly unlikely that an infected bird would enter the food supply, but even if it did proper cooking kills the AI virus just as it does other viruses and bacteria, so there's no reason to be concerned about eating chicken or turkey if you've properly prepared it."

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns, March 20, 2006

"Consumers can have complete confidence in the safety of the poultry products they enjoy at home and away from home. This is a poultry health issue, not a food safety issue. Bird flu in poultry does not pose a food safety risk because it is highly unlikely sick poultry would be slaughtered for consumption, and thoroughly cooking meat and eggs would destroy the virus. You cannot get avian influenza from properly handled or cooked food."

Michael Doyle, Ph.D., Director, Center for Food Safety, University of Georgia, March 20, 2006

"In 1918 scientists did not know what viruses were and did not understand how they caused disease. Today we know a lot about them, can make vaccines against them and have some effective antiviral drugs. We also have methods of monitoring disease outbreaks and communicating information about them that were unavailable in the past. There are plenty of health threats to worry about that are real and that we can take precautions against, among them the ordinary seasonal flu that is in full swing (and can still be warded off with a flu shot). We need to keep an eye on the avian flu. We do not need to lose sleep over it."

Dr. Andrew Weil, Time Magazine, January 23, 2006

"It is safe to eat cooked poultry and eggs. The risk of infection appears to come only from live birds as well as slaughtering and plucking birds and exposure to blood or feces. There are no reported cases of bird flu being transmitted through eggs, but even if the risk exists, the pasteurization process likely would kill the virus, as would cooking. Use common sense and protect cooking surfaces, cutting boards and counters from exposure to raw poultry and raw eggs, which also carry risk for salmonella."

Wall Street Journal Health Journal, November 1, 2005