



COMBATING AVIAN INFLUENZA IN ASIA

ASIA: The prevalence of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (AI) virus presents considerable challenges for countries in Asia; it destroys livelihoods, is highly mobile, can cross borders without detection, and can be deadly for humans.

Developing countries are the most vulnerable to infectious disease, which places a further hardship on those struggling with high levels of poverty, rapidly increasing populations, poor technology and communications, and a lack of health infrastructure.

Australia's international response to the regional threat of pandemic influenza and emerging infectious diseases is focused on:



VIETNAM: Field testing of poultry. PHOTO: Lorrie Lorrie Graham.

- Pandemic preparedness and planning
- surveillance and prevention of the spread of potentially infectious disease
- strengthening health systems and institutions to deal with emerging diseases
- raising community awareness of the risks of AI and other emerging diseases
- promoting cooperation and collaboration across borders and regional networks, and
- helping countries in the region develop appropriate responses to outbreaks

Examples of Australian assistance for regional coordination, outbreak response and pandemic preparedness include:

- APEC initiatives such as simulations, an experts register, institutional linkages and contribution to the APEC Support Fund
- the ASEAN+3 Emerging Infectious Diseases Program which focuses on disease surveillance and response, capacity building and regional cooperation
- community awareness programs implemented by CARE Australia in the Mekong
- a contribution to the World Bank Trust Fund for Avian and Human Influenza
- support to other expert technical agencies such as World Health Organization (WHO), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Australia's support focuses on ensuring our partner governments are prepared for a potential outbreak of any emerging infectious disease by improving the capacity of their animal and human health systems to monitor, diagnose and respond to diseases such as Avian Influenza.

To keep up to date on Australia's response to the regional threat of emerging infectious diseases and information about AusAID's work in Asia go to www.ausaid.gov.au