



Avian influenza. Prevention, response and control

August 21st – 23rd 2006
Vatra Dornei



AGENDA

DAY I

15:00 – 15:30	Opening session and Pre-test
15.30 – 16.30	Bird flu – background information
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 – 18:00	Bird flu risk for humans

DAY II

08:30 – 10:00	Introducing the legislative framework
10:00 – 11:00	Case studies
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 - 12:30	Communication I
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Communication II
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00	Group exercises
17:00 – 17:30	Evaluation, post-test and closing session

Bird Flu

Prevention, Response and Control

This material was prepared by:

Professor Doina Daneş, Counselor, Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority
Mioara Predescu, M.D., IEC Center Coordinator, Public Health Institute in Bucharest
Raluca Teodoru, M.D., TOTEM
Daniela Pişigoi, M.D., Technical Expert, JSI Research & Training Institute
Irina Dincă, M.D., Program Coordinator, JSI Research & Training Institute
Dana Iancu, M.D., Program Coordinator, JSI Research & Training Institute

Sergiu Țâra, Executive Manager, Communes' Association in Romania
Blythe Robinson, local government expert consultant, PADCO/AECOM

This document was prepared by JSI Research & Training Institute Inc. – Romanian Office, within the framework of the project Romanian Family Health Initiative (RFHI), in cooperation with PADCO/AECOM, under the technical assistance program for local government reform project (LGRP). The document may be integrally or partially replicated or adapted provided the source is mentioned. Please send copies of any materials prepared based on this document to:

JSI Research & Training Institute Inc. – Romanian Office,
Str. Gh. Manu no. 5, sector 1, Bucharest
Tel: 40 21 650 20 80
Fax: 40 21 650 20 25
E-mail: office@jsi.ro

and

PADCO/AECOM – Romanian Office
Bd. Dacia no. 29, sector 1, Bucharest
Tel: (021) 310 0718
Fax: (021) 310 0719

The necessary funds for preparing this material were provided by the U.S. Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under cooperation agreement 186-A-00-01-00103-00 and contract no. EPP-I-00-04-0026-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of USAID.

AGENDA

DAY I

- 15:00 – 15:30 **Opening session and Pre-test**
- 15.30 – 16.30 **Bird flu – background information**
- 16:30 – 17:00 Coffee break
- 17:00 – 18:00 **Bird flu risk for humans**

DAY II

- 08:30 – 10:00 **Introducing the legislative framework**
- 10:00 – 11:00 **Case studies**
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 - 12:30 **Communication I**
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:30 **Communication II**
- 15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break
- 16:00 – 17:00 **Group exercises**
- 17:00 – 17:30 **Evaluation, post-test and closing session**

BIRD FLU QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (1)

1. What are viruses and how are they different from bacteria?

Viruses are extremely simple bodies that replicate only inside another being's cells. A virus is thousand times smaller and simpler than a bacterium: bacteria have a cell structure similar to the cells of any other body, whereas viruses have an intracellular structure – only nucleic acid and layer proteins. As a result, antibiotics – medicines that can destroy bacteria – have no effect whatsoever on viruses, which can be “attacked” only with “antiviral” medicines.

Each virus can only “live” inside certain types of cells, for which it has the “key” to open the walls of the respective cell. Thus, flu viruses usually replicate inside the cells of the respiratory system and only seldom in the cells of lung alveoli, thus causing a respiratory disease. Moreover, flu viruses are peculiar to certain species (human viruses determining human diseases, avian viruses leading to bird diseases, etc.).

Flu viruses are highly “versatile”, undergoing frequent mutations with significant shifts in their features. The newly-appeared viruses may have features that render them more aggressive, penetrating the host cells more easily or, on the contrary, they may become less pathogenic, therefore less efficient in triggering a disease.

Influenza is a disease known for a very long time. There have been several flu pandemics over the ages, determined by mutations of the flu virus generating highly pathogenic strains. The first flu pandemic (known as the “Spanish flu”) in the 20th century is estimated to have killed over 20 million people.

Avian or bird flu is an infection triggered by flu viruses peculiar to birds, which normally affect turkeys, chicken, ostriches, pheasants, ducks, geese as well as any other poultry and wild birds from the local and migratory fauna. Virus transmission from birds to species of mammals is limited. In natural conditions, pigs are the most likely hosts, while humans only after the virus has undergone certain changes. Pigs get contaminated and infected with avian flu viruses, but they do not get sick. The same applies in case of certain flu viruses specific to humans. Tigers and cats get infected and may get sick from certain avian flu virus strains such as the H5N1 (but not just any flu virus strain from birds).

2. How is bird flu transmitted?

Initially occurring in Asia, the infection spread to other areas through migratory birds. The virus is transmitted through infected or dead birds, contaminated water, feces and secretions from the respiratory system of infected wild birds. Once infected, poultry and wild birds alike (including fowl, geese, ducks, turkeys and pigeons) may fall sick and die.

Many species of wild birds get infected, do not fall sick, yet they preserve and eliminate the virus for a long time.

In case of birds, the disease is transmitted through:

- Feathers stained by feces or secretions from the respiratory system: birds coming into contact with a sick bird can get the virus off its feathers.
- Excrements: one single gram of contaminated excrements may infect up to one million birds.
- Air: the virus is less likely to be transmitted through the respiratory system, by inhaling the aerosols resulting from infected birds' feces and secretions.

3. How can the spread of the infection be contained?

In order to prevent poultry infection, they should be kept within specially-built premises isolating them completely from wild birds. Such premises should be completely covered, so that the excrements of other flying birds might not reach the fowl. At the same time, poultry should be divided by species (ducks kept separately from geese, hens, turkeys and so on). If such premises cannot be built, the fowl should be confined to the courtyard, so as to limit any contact with other birds.

Furthermore, all measures shall be taken to limit the contact between wild birds and fowl or humans (either direct contact or contact with fluids, feathers or other products thereof). For instance, children should not pick feathers off the ground, play or touch sick or dead birds, fountains should be kept covered, the fountain bucket should be immersed at all times, so that wild birds might not drink from it, etc. Complying with the basic hygiene rules (such as washing one's hands) and with the prevention measures established by the authorities shall ensure prevention of the disease both in birds and in humans.

Once an outbreak is identified, the best way to prevent the spread of the disease is to sacrifice the birds in the infected farms or premises. It is a radical measure, yet the disease is highly contagious and, for want of swift reaction, the infection will spread in no time.

4. What are the implications for human health?

The spread of the virus among birds entails two risks for humans.

The first one is the risk of getting infected and falling sick, when the virus is passed on from birds to humans. Of the few avian flu viruses passed on to humans, the H5N1 led to the highest incidence of serious disease and fatalities among humans. Unlike regular flu, the disease triggered by the H5N1 virus displays an unusually aggressive clinical course, with a severe and swift development, leading to viral pneumonia and insufficiency of several organs. More than half of the persons infected with this virus have died. Most cases occurred in healthy children and young adults.

The second possible risk is that the virus might undergo certain mutations, thus becoming highly infectious and readily transmissible among humans. Unfortunately, scientists believe this scenario is highly likely, as mankind is practically on the brink of a new flu pandemic leading to a large number of human casualties.

According to the World Health Organization, the inter-human transmission of bird flu has still to be scientifically proven.

5. What are the signs of disease displayed by birds?

The flu virus determines a systemic disease in case of birds, with polymorph manifestations – digestive, nervous and respiratory. The disease follows a swift course and the bird is visibly sick.



Possible signs of avian flu in birds:

- red eyes;
- obvious nasal and lachrymal secretions;
- altered general condition;
- swollen and cyanotic crest;
- tumefied sinuses;
- violet, cyanotic and tumefied skin on the head and neck;
- breathing difficulties;
- quick aggravation of signs and symptoms.

6. What should bird owners do?

- Notify the vet of any sick or dead birds or animals;
- Avoid touching the carcasses bare-handed;

- Keep the birds locked in shelters, so as to avoid any contact with birds from other households or with wild birds;
- Keep ducks and geese away from ponds or lakes;
- Keep children from playing with poultry, wild birds or bird carcasses;
- Grant their entire support to the sanitary (human and veterinarian) personnel and to the authorities in charge. The doctors' mission is to tend to human and animal health.

7. What should farm bird breeders do?

Farm bird breeders should abide by the bio-security norms and provide their entire support to vets and state authorities.

8. What was the social and economic impact of the avian flu epizooty in Romania?

- approximately 1.2 million birds killed;
- indemnifications granted to bird owners currently estimated at about 2.5 million euros;
- significant amounts spent on:
 - o laboratory examinations EUR 1,071,428;
 - o diagnosis sets EUR 3,040,000;
 - o clinical exams EUR 270,000;
 - o bird incineration and euthanasia EUR 8,003,775;
- plus other losses:
 - o in aviculture – EUR 43 million following the drop in sales and EUR 4 million as a result of the ban on exports;
 - o in tourism: EUR 6 million / tourist enterprise / 6 months in the Danube Delta.

BIRD FLU QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (2)

1. What is the current status of bird flu in Romania and worldwide?

There were no cases of H5N1 in humans in Romania.

The number of human infections and the countries where these cases occurred are listed in the table below, according to data supplied by the World Health Organization (6 June 2006).

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	No. of cases	No. of fatalities								
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	8	5
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	6	6
China	0	0	0	0	8	5	10	7	18	12
Djibouti	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Egypt	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	6	14	6
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	17	11	32	26	49	37
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
Thailand	0	0	17	12	5	2	0	0	22	14
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	12	4
Vietnam	3	3	29	20	61	19	0	0	93	42
Total	3	3	46	32	95	41	81	52	225	128

2. How can people get infected?

The main cause of infection is the direct contact with sick birds or with contaminated surfaces and objects. Up to now, most cases of avian flu in humans occurred in rural and pre-urban areas, where people keep their poultry in the courtyard, including on children playgrounds. Thus, children are exposed to the infection risk. Infection may also occur while cutting, plucking or preparing the poultry for cooking.

3. Is it safe to eat chicken meat and other chicken products?

Yes, provided some safety measures are taken. Eggs and meat should be thermally processed, because the H5N1 virus does not resist to high temperatures. Such products should be cooked at regular temperature (70°C inside the products) to destroy the virus. Make sure the chicken meat is well cooked throughout (without any “pink” parts) and that eggs are hardboiled.

Moreover, due care should be taken with any avian fluid (secretions, blood, excrements, etc.). In case of infected birds, they contain high quantities of virus. Bird fluids should by no means come into contact with raw products. If handling raw meat or other raw chicken products, wash your hands carefully and properly clean and disinfect the surfaces that came into contact with avian products (cutlery, etc.). Use hot water and soap.

Bird flu is not transmitted through well-cooked food!

4. How easily is the virus transmitted from birds to humans?

Very hard! Although more than 200 cases of avian flu in humans have been identified so far, this is a relatively low number compared to the high incidence of sick birds. For reasons still to be determined, the virus does not have a uniform pattern of affecting exposed individuals, as only part of the people that came into contact with the virus actually became infected. Nonetheless, the danger still lurks and it should not be ignored!

5. Is there vaccination against this virus?

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine against this infection for the time being, yet works are already underway in several countries. The vaccine will be developed to counter the bird flu pandemic and it will have to match as much as possible the virus triggering such pandemic. Hence, such a vaccine will be available on a large scale only several months after the pandemic occurring, and the quantities produced will probably be well below the anticipated demand. However, a human anti-flu vaccine is available every fall/winter, prepared based on the information supplied by the World Health Organization, which can protect us against human flu epidemic.

6. Is there treatment against this virus?

Unfortunately, since viruses are extremely simple bodies, it is difficult to destroy them. Once they have penetrated the cells, destroying them can be tantamount to sacrificing the host cells.

There are currently some medicines that are somewhat efficient against flu viruses (e.g. Tamiflu). Such medicines can somewhat confine the multiplication of viruses and thus they give the human body some respite to prepare for the fight through its own antibodies.

7. What are the signs of disease in humans?

Influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by flu viruses. Its symptomatology is very much similar to other respiratory infections caused by other viruses or bacteria (such as colds), with the exception that people with influenza have an altered general condition.

Features	Influenza	Usual cold
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	Usually high (38 - 41 degrees Celsius)	Absent or moderate
Muscular pains	Severe	Usually mild or moderate
Weakness	Severe	Usually mild or moderate
Sore throat and coughing	Usually manifest quite early	Within 2-3 days from the

Bird flu. Prevention, response and control

		onset of the disease
Chest pains	Usually a burning sensation under the sternum	Mild, if any
Sneezing	Occasionally	Frequently
Length	7-10 days	3-4 days

In case of bird flu, symptoms are severe and they include: high fever, coughing, breathing difficulties, altered general condition.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR FIGHTING BIRD FLU

No cases of avian flu transmitted to humans have been reported in Romania so far. This is partly due to the swift reaction of the government and of the local authorities whenever a new outbreak was reported. In order to prevent any human cases and limit the spread of bird flu, the government passed several laws impacting public administration at all levels, as well as individual bird owners. This brief presentation covers the most important sections of the laws that mayors should be familiar with. The information is listed in the order of responsibility, starting from the central government, then on to the local government and ultimately to citizens. Also included are the sanctions applicable in case of breach of these laws. The direct responsibilities of mayors will be highlighted.

1. *The relation between local authorities and the Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority (Government Ordinance No. 42/2004):*
 - Both the central and the local government authorities should cooperate and support veterinarians in carrying out their sanitary-veterinarian tasks. (Art. 17);
 - This National Authority sets the obligations and the responsibilities of public administration institutions and bodies in the sanitary-veterinarian field. (Art. 8);
 - The Authority may require that the central and local government authorities enforce the legal measures in case of need or imminent risk to food safety or health (Art. 11, subparagraph 1).

2. *The Government has taken several measures aimed at preventing bird flu outbreaks. The measures required for preventing and fighting contagious and parasitic animal diseases are also mandatory for local councils and individual bird owners. If a contagious disease spreads over one or several counties, the Central Anti-epizootic Committee shall be summoned (Government Ordinance No. 42/2004).*
 - In order to support the fight against contagious animal diseases, the local or county council shall activate the anti-epizootic committees. Such entities shall consist of the heads of the various departments in the area, as well as any other persons in charge of enforcing the control measures established by the Authority with regard to fighting diseases. (Art. 26, para. 4).
 - The county anti-epizootic committee shall be activated by Prefect's decision (Order No. 26/2005). Members of the committee shall be:
 - a. The General Manager of the General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development;
 - b. The Head of the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate (technical secretary of the committee);
 - c. The Head of the County Directorate for Public Health;

- d. The Commandant of the County Police;
 - e. The heads of institutions and entities carrying out activities related to output, transport, processing, storage and sale of animals and products of animal and vegetal origin;
 - f. The heads of forestry and hunting entities at county level;
 - g. Other heads of institutions in charge of preventing and fighting animal diseases at county level.
- The county anti-epizootic committee has the following tasks:
 - a. Periodically reviews the actual standing at county level and sets forth measures for the improvement thereof. In case of an epizooty occurring within the county, the committee has the following tasks:
 - b. Establishes the general action plan for preventing and fighting epizooties, according to the legal provisions or the recommendations received from the central epizootic committee, accompanied by the related public awareness campaigns;
 - c. Ensures the technical and material basis for implementing the plan;
 - d. Monitors the enforcement of the action plan, by assigning tasks to each committee member, as per their fields of business and territorial coverage;
 - e. Assesses the efficiency of the undertaken actions, by taking the required measures (Art. 2).
 - Anti-epizootic committees at city, town and commune level shall be set up by decision of the local councils and presided over by the mayor. They shall have the same tasks as the county-level committees to which they are subordinated (Art. 3). They shall be made up of:
 - a. The official veterinarian of the territorial sanitary-veterinarian branch;
 - b. The heads of all sectors in charge of preventing and fighting contagious animal diseases;
 - c. The empowered freelancer veterinarian shall serve as secretary.
3. *Measures to be taken in case of bird flu (Order No. 26/2005):*
- Local councils should immediately report any outbreaks to the veterinarian and take the following measures until the latter's arrival:
 - a. Make sure that the infected or possibly infected animals have been isolated and impose restrictions on the movement of animals, meat and other products from such animals, fodder and any other materials or objects likely to have been contaminated;
 - b. Carry out investigations on the spread of the disease and check all animals in the courtyards where the infected ones were identified;
 - c. Interrupt the issuance of any further ownership and health certificates for animals and withdraw the previously issued ones;

- d. Halt or isolate any passing flocks or herds where cases of disease or suspicious animals have been identified, until the arrival of the official veterinarian (Art. 48).
 - Based on the official veterinarian's decision, the local council shall take all legal measures for eliminating the disease. The local council decision shall be enforced through epizootic committees. Depending on the actual unfolding of the disease, the provisions of the local council decision may be supplemented or amended upon proposal of the official veterinarian or of a hierarchically superior official veterinarian. (Art. 48);
 - The local council shall implement the first or second degree quarantine based on the sanitary-veterinarian certificate of findings prepared by the official veterinarian pursuant to Order No. 156/1999 (Art. 74);
 - Local councils shall enforce the quarantine measures through epizootic committees. The sanitary-veterinarian staff together with police officers shall make sure that these measures are complied with and shall sanction anyone found in breach of these provisions (Art. 76);
 - The restrictive measures on the movement of animals, humans and products of animal and vegetal origin shall be mandatory for all animal and product owners, local councils and the police. The supervision of the sanitary-veterinarian condition of animals and the enforcement of the technical prophylaxis measures shall be incumbent upon the sanitary-veterinarian staff (Art. 82);
 - The local council shall lift the first and second degree quarantine restrictions based on the official sanitary-veterinarian certificate of findings (Art. 89).
4. *Local authorities are bound to report any outbreaks and notify the population on the incidence of the disease. The relevant sections of the law and the sanctions in case of breach are listed hereunder (Law No. 221/2006).*
- The authorities shall immediately report any bird flu outbreaks in their area, as well as any restrictions imposed by anti-epizootic committees, the protection and surveillance areas, and any other areas established by programs for fighting bird flu, through any means of information they might have available. (Art.1, para. 2);
 - The mayor of the administrative-territorial unit shall inform each animal owner and display in public areas the measures for preventing and fighting contagious animal diseases. (Art. 2¹, para. (1)).
 - Each animal owner shall be notified directly, by concluding an official protocol of acknowledgement, signed by both parties (Art. 2¹, para. 2);
 - Non-compliance with the above-mentioned obligations shall be deemed as an offence and punished by one to three years' imprisonment (Art. 9, para. 1¹);
 - Failure to comply with the decisions issued by the central epizootic committee and the county and local epizootic committees shall be deemed

as an offence and punished by six months to one year imprisonment. (Art. 9, para. (3)).

5. *When informed of a bird flu outbreak, the official veterinarian in the area shall check all animals and take the following measures (Order No. 26/2005):*

- Double checks the measures already taken by the animal owner or by the local council, by supplementing them if needed;
- Examines the contaminated or suspicious animals, the meat and products from emergency-sacrificed animals, by performing an autopsy of the dead animals;
- If the disease has spread to several courtyards, examines all the animals in the community and even those from neighboring communities;
- Carries out the anti-epizootic investigation so as to determine the precise date when the disease occurred, its origins, whether the contaminated or suspicious animals or infested products have been removed from the town. In this case, the vet shall inform the relevant authorities;
- Conducts any other research works for clarifying the diagnosis;
- In case of animal farms having their own veterinarians, they are bound to make available to the official veterinarian all data and information required for setting the diagnosis (Art. 49);
- If, following investigations, the official veterinarian excludes the existence of the disease, all restrictions shall be lifted (Art. 50);
- If the conducted investigations do not entirely rule out the suspicion of contagious disease, all sick and suspicious animals will be isolated and placed under observation, while samples will be taken for lab tests.
 - a. The official veterinarian shall notify the county Sanitary-Veterinarian Directorate by phone;
 - b. In the absence of any recent carcass or emergency-sacrificed animals, the official veterinarian may ask for the approval to sacrifice a sick or suspicious animal with a view to setting the diagnosis. Samples shall be taken according to the law (Art. 51);
- Regardless of whether the disease can be officially confirmed or not, all prevention measures shall be taken (Art. 52);
- Once the disease has been officially acknowledged, the official veterinarian shall notify the Sanitary-Veterinarian Directorate and the neighboring veterinary branches on a 20 km radius. Both the Sanitary-Veterinarian Directorates at county-level and the neighboring veterinary branches will be notified of any highly contagious diseases and of the high number of sick animals or humans (Art. 56);
- Whenever the disease is transmissible to humans, the physician of the concerned sanitary branch shall be immediately notified as well, even if there are no infected persons (Art. 57).

6. *What is quarantine (Order No. 26/2005):*

- It is a complex of restrictive measures imposed on the movement of animals, humans, products of animal and vegetal origin, fodder, utensils, transport means, dejections, etc., with a view to halting the spread of animal contagious diseases;
- Depending on the actual spread of the disease, the degree of contagiousness, the ways of transmission and the number of threatened animals, quarantine may be confined to a single courtyard or may be extended to groups of communes or wider territories (Art. 69);
- There are three degrees of quarantine: I, II and III (Art. 70);
- First-degree quarantine applies to highly-contagious diseases, such as the foot-and-mouth disease and the avian flu. In most cases, the quarantine imposed in case of bird flu outbreaks will be of the first degree.
 - a. The movement of all animals (including those not hit by the concerned disease), humans, products of animal and vegetal origin, vehicles, utensils and objects likely to be contaminated is strictly forbidden;
 - b. Animals should be kept inside sealed shelters, while contaminated courtyards shall be placed under observation. Animal dejections and fodder remains shall be destroyed on a daily basis;
 - c. Entry/exit of persons in/from the territories under quarantine is strictly forbidden; it may be approved only in outstanding circumstances, under sanitary-veterinarian supervision;
 - d. Quarantined areas shall be supplied by transshipment. Permission for vehicles in the community shall be granted only in outstanding circumstances;
 - e. All community activities and events that might contribute to the spread of the epizooty are strictly forbidden. (Art. 71).
- Second-degree quarantine applies to epizooties with an average spread, such as the classical swine fever.
 - a. Movement restrictions apply solely to contaminated courtyards;
 - b. Affected animals should be kept in shelters inside the community. Introducing / removing receptive animals or products from the affected species is strictly forbidden;
 - c. Individuals may leave the outbreak subject to special disinfecting procedures, with the approval of the local veterinarian authority (Art. 72).
- Third-degree quarantine applies to diseases transmitted via direct contact with receptive animals (e.g. rabies, tuberculosis, etc.).
 - a. Certain restrictions are imposed on the movement and reproduction of sick and suspicious animals (Art. 73).
 - b. Shall be imposed solely based on the sanitary-veterinarian certificate of findings prepared by the official veterinarian (Art. 75).

7. *Local authorities are in charge of knackery procedures (Government Ordinance No. 47/2005)*

- Local councils are responsible for neutralizing animal carcasses from individual households of animal breeders or otherwise found dead. (Art. 9, para. (2))
- Local councils shall either resort to their own duly licensed incineration plants or shall conclude service-rendering agreements with entities in charge of knackery.” (Art. 9, para. (3))
- In case of isolated settlements, animal carcasses shall be neutralized by the local council.” (Art. 10, para. (3))
- The following shall be deemed as contraventions and punished by fines ranging from RON 1,000 to RON 2,000: failure of the local councils to set up the burial spots mentioned under Art. 6 or non-compliance of such spots with the organizing and operating requirements; fines ranging from RON 1,500 to RON 2,500 shall be applied in case of the local councils’ failure to conclude service-rendering agreements with entities in charge of knackery or failure to organize the neutralizing of animal remains, under the law.” (Art. 16)

8. *Legal responsibilities of individual or corporate animal owners (Ordinance 42/2004):*

Animal owners are bound to take the following measures for protecting animal health and preventing the spread of diseases:

- All citizens have the duty to prevent diseases and protect animal health and the environment (Art. 1 and Art. 1 of Government Decision No. 1415/2004).
- Any natural or legal entity involved in activities influencing animal health shall comply with all provisions of the sanitary-veterinarian legislation in order to ensure and guarantee animal and public health, environment protection and food safety (Art. 2).
- Animal owners should be familiar with the tasks of territorial sanitary-veterinarian units and the ways in which they apply to them:
 - a. provide the official veterinarian with the entire support for accomplishing the latter’s tasks and duties;
 - b. allow the official veterinarian’s free, permanent and unrestricted access in order to perform animal inspections, controls, checks or examinations (Art. 18);
 - c. ensure the required assistance during any such animal inspections, controls, checks or examinations;
 - d. report the finding of any suspicious or sick animals and – until the veterinarian’s arrival – isolate the dead or sacrificed animals and refrain from marketing any products or meat originating from such animals;

- e. report within the legal deadline of any animal movements, the marketing of living animals or the disappearance, death or sacrificing thereof;
- f. enforce the sanitary-veterinarian measures for preventing animal diseases and for the control and prevention of the spread thereof (Art. 16).

9. *Animal owners' reporting obligations:*

- Report to the Mayor's Office the exact number of poultry owned;
- Keep all fowl within shelters or well-isolated premises to avoid contact with wild birds' dejections (Art. 2¹, para. (3), Law 221/2006);
- Contact the local council within 24 hours in case of finding any case of disease, suspicious animals, death or emergency sacrificing and make available any information in this sense (Art. 46 of Order No. 26/2005).

10. *Sanctions for breaching the reporting obligations imposed on animal owners: Animal owners shall have to pay a fine ranging from RON 300 to RON 600 in case of the following contraventions (Decision No. 1580/2005):*

- Failure to report within 24 hours of any case of disease, suspicious animals, death or emergency sacrificing;
- Failure to isolate sick animals, breaching the movement restrictions of persons outside contaminated areas, failure to preserve the carcasses of dead or sacrificed animals, or selling the meat and products originating from such animals prior to the veterinarian's arrival;
- Breaching the restrictions imposed by competent veterinarians;
- Sanctions shall be enforced by police officers (Art. 4¹, para. 1 & 2);
- The persons subject to sanctions shall not be entitled to indemnifications (Art. 4²);
- All birds found outside households shall be considered to have no owner, shall be confiscated and sacrificed without any indemnification (Art. 9¹, Law 221/2006);
- Breaching the hunting restrictions (Ordinance No. 11/2006)
 - a. It is strictly forbidden to hunt migratory and sedentary birds (Annex 1).
 - b. Failure to abide by this provision shall be punished by 1 to 3 years' imprisonment or fine ranging between RON 5,000 and RON 25,000 (Art. 9, para. (1)).

11. *Indemnification procedures for sacrificed animals (Decision No. 1415/2004)*

- The owners of sacrificed animals shall be indemnified if such measures have been taken in order to eliminate contagious diseases from the contaminated areas (Art. 26 of Decision No. 1480/2005, and Art. 26, para. (6) of Ordinance 42/2004);

- Compensatory payments shall be made from the state budget, according to the replacement value at the market price for the sacrificed, killed or otherwise affected animals (Art. 4, para. 1 and Art. 26, para. (7) of Ordinance No. 42/2004);
- Indemnifications shall be paid to individuals if they are the legal owners of the sacrificed animals and they comply with the legal norms on animal registration (Art. 3, para. (1), Annex 17);
- Indemnifications shall be granted based on the documentation prepared by the sanitary-veterinarian units in the affected county, duly endorsed by the county directorate for agriculture and rural development (Art. 3 para. (3));
- Indemnifications resulting from the rapid closing of an outbreak shall be paid regardless of whether the animals are insured or not (Art. 3, para. (4));
- The actual amount of the indemnification to be granted shall be set by an evaluation commission made up of: the specialist of the zootechnics improvement and reproduction unit within the county directorate for agriculture and rural development, the official veterinarian, the specialist from the local agricultural consultancy center, the agricultural agent, the Mayor or a representative thereof (Art. 4, para. (2)).
- The animal replacement value shall be determined depending upon the genetic and zootechnics value, gender, age, weight, physiological condition, production category, as per the market price on the date the outbreak was closed. (Art. 4, para. (3));
- The entire documentation prepared by animal owners and by the official veterinarian shall be approved by the senior accountant of the county directorate for agriculture and rural development (Art. 5).
- Indemnifications shall be paid based on the Settlement Sheet for establishing and paying indemnifications due to animal owners (see the Template in Annex 3 and Art. 1). The documentation should include:
 - a. The epizootics inquiry prepared by the official veterinarian of the region where the disease was reported;
 - b. The certificate of findings acknowledging the disease, issued by the official veterinarian;
 - c. The evaluation slip prepared and signed by the evaluation commission;
 - d. Copies of the analysis bulletins issued by the state sanitary-veterinarian laboratories;
 - e. The official protocols concluded and the sanitary-veterinarian certificates for the transport of livestock issued by the official veterinarian for individual animal breeders;
 - f. The documents attesting any amounts of money received by animal owners from sales following animal sacrificing, if applicable;
 - g. Affidavit that the animal(s) has/have been insured, if applicable;
 - h. The Settlement Sheet according to the template listed in Annex 3.

12. *The responsibilities of other Romanian Ministries as regards bird flu:*

- Ministry of Health:
 - a. Supervises the staff in charge of bird flu cases;
 - b. Ensures treatment within healthcare units;
 - c. Makes available informative materials on the identification of flu and the procedures to be followed when a new outbreak is detected;
 - d. Coordinates the bird flu prevention / control activities.

- Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism
 - a. Establishes the disinfection points on national and European roads so as to isolate quarantined areas. Places disinfecting filters at the entrance/exit in/from airports and harbors.
 - b. Hands out informative brochures and materials on bird flu in airports and harbors.
 - c. Cooperates with customs offices for the sanitary-veterinarian inspection of travelers' luggage, ensures the sanitary-veterinarian control of food products distributed onboard the airplanes, etc.;

- Ministry of Administration and the Interior
 - a. Works together with other Ministries to coordinate the transport of animals, enforce the relevant measures at border crossing points and hand out informative brochures and materials on specific health issues.

- Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority
 - a. Imposes restrictions on the movement and imports of livestock and products originating from countries where bird flu outbreaks have been reported, by ensuring the intervention of specialists in case of bird flu outbreaks;
 - b. Supplies the disinfecting substances and the protective equipment for the personnel in charge.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

Introduction

The need to be informed and to communicate is more manifest nowadays than ever in the history of mankind. Coping with a complex and lengthy issue such as the bird flu epidemics involves a major communication component. The media is often referred to as the “fourth power in the state”, in a world where information is the most precious asset of each individual.

Communication with the media, building a good relationship with it, imply a certain effort from the respective person or institution, but this effort will definitely bear fruit. Well-informed media is tantamount to a well-informed population. For a person in a public position, the media should be a support, a partner, because otherwise the media would sooner or later turn into an enemy, an error hunter or a source of sarcastic comments, all these situations being not only unpleasant, but also likely to hinder considerably the accomplishment of tasks.

In order to approach the “bird flu” topic in relation to the media, you have to be prepared for a long term *tour de force*. From the PR man’s perspective, this topic is extremely complex and it involves several sensitive communication elements, which can go as far as “crisis communication”. The ideal strategy would be to support a long-term communication project with the press and the population, structured into several stages and combining several PR techniques.

Basic rules in media relations

Media relations should at all times comply with certain basic principles, which will gradually lead to a relationship of mutual confidence and support between media institutions and the organization's spokesperson:

1. **Honesty.** From this point of view, there is no alternative whatsoever: in your relation with the media, particularly when public issues are at stake, honesty is a must. It helps build consistent and persuasive messages over time. Nothing destroys faster the credibility of an individual or of an institution than the disclosure of a publicly communicated lie. If you do not know the answer to a certain question, it is better to admit it than try to improvise – your interlocutor and your audience will feel it. However, this does not mean that you should not properly prepare for an interview, having ready the answers to important questions!! More than two “I don't know” answers during an interview will prove that you have not prepared for the meeting!
2. **Politeness and promptness.** A mutual cooperation relationship should be based on mutual respect. Respect for the media mainly involves a polite tone in any exchange of information and supplying to the media the information requested within the promised time span (let's not forget that all journalists have delivery deadlines and they depend on the promised information, within the promised time span!). This also includes written information, whenever possible, which will help media representatives avoid any errors / interpretations and better structure their material.
3. **Prior documentation.** In order for the press to depend on you as a trustworthy source of information and in order for you to be convincing enough in front of the audience, you should be well familiar with the issue at stake and have the answers ready to the main questions that might be raised in this respect. This means spending some time preparing the interview prior to meeting the press (see *preparing the interview* below).
4. **What to avoid in your relation with the media:** refusal to talk to the press / to answer the questions, refusal to be quoted when asked for permission, the request that certain information already supplied should not be published or be published at all costs (guiding the journalist).

Ways of disseminating information to the population via the media

The success of a public communication largely depends on the way in which the information is disclosed to the population / to the press. The most frequent events are press conferences, during which information is supplied to the press and then, based on the materials received, journalists prepare an article for the population. There are other ways of informing the press / the population, which can prove equally useful if properly prepared:

- 1) Debates / roundtable / workshops with the media: imply an in-depth analysis of a certain topic, by providing more detailed information to participants.

- 2) Informative voyage or other initiatives helping the press gather documentation on the spot / experiment a certain ting for real: inviting the press on site for collecting data.
- 3) Delivering press releases / news etc. on a regular or occasional basis, by maintaining the relationship with the press and informing it regularly on a certain topic, yet without direct contact. In their turn, journalists may require individual interviews / additional information to help clarify some issues that will reach the general public.
- 4) (Exclusive) Interviews to certain publications – involves a higher degree of assuming the message before the audience, since the message is conveyed directly by the interviewed person, instead of being filtered by the media institution / the interviewer.

Each institution / person will build its own press communication project, by resorting to its own mix of PR techniques and instruments. Yet, regardless of the mix employed, it is extremely important that you be proactive rather than reactive – in other words “come with the answers ready in front of the press before the journalists even formulate the questions”, thus anticipating both their needs and those of the population. In this way, journalists will appreciate your prompt reaction capacity and will presuppose that you do the same in your everyday activity – including as regards the passing of measures for preventing the incidence / spread of the bird flu epidemics.

Furthermore, you should have in mind that a bird flu outbreak involves several stages of unfolding events, which need to be addressed differently in communication. In other words, depends on the actual timing and context, you should be prepared with adequate messages to be conveyed to the media in the most constructive manner.

The interview

While news and press releases are active forms of conveying information, in which the initiative belongs to the issuer, the interview represents a passive form of communication, since the interviewed person merely answers the journalist's questions; nonetheless, the journalists' interest may be kindled when it comes to requesting an interview: for instance, news and press releases often prompt journalists to request interviews so as to go into more depth on the initial information. For journalists themselves, the interview (be it oral, by phone, written, for the radio or television) is both a way to convey information and a means of self-documentation.

The interview for the *written press* can take the shape of an audio-taped discussion, which the journalist then processes for publication; or by submitting the written questions, which the interviewed person answers in writing, as well; or over the phone (also applicable to radio interviews).

As far as *radio and television* are concerned, it is generally considered that there are three types of interviews, depending on the previous preparations available to the interviewed person:

- **spontaneous interview**, when nothing is prepared beforehand, and the interviewed person is familiar only with the general topic to be discussed;
- **prepared interview**, when all questions and answers have been prepared beforehand, often even in writing; both the journalist and the interviewed person abide strictly by the prepared "script". The advantage is that the already determined statements are those considered the most important; conversely, it is obvious that reading or repeating something that has been practiced beforehand leads to a lack of spontaneity, thus creating an artificial atmosphere;
- **semi-spontaneous interview**, when the journalist and the interviewed person agree on the types of questions beforehand, allowing the latter to think of the answers at length. As a result, answers are usually more detailed than in spontaneous interviews and they no longer have the artificial tinge given by prepared interviews.

A. Preparing for the interview

Thorough preparation beforehand is the key to success in any interview, particularly those on radio and television. The success of an interview hinges on the state of preparedness and the degree of self-control during the interview itself. Throughout the preparation and unfolding stages, you should have in mind that an interview (especially a televised interview) involves both rational and emotional communication with the public, and often times the emotional message (the public's "impression") is much more important than words themselves.

Step 1

Define the purpose(s) of the interview. This can mean both the interviewer's purpose and

your own purpose, i.e. the impact you are trying to make by this public appearance and the messages you are about to convey.

As regards the *interviewer's purpose*, it should be sorted out from the very moment the journalist asks for the interview. In order for you to accept an interview, you should know why the journalist takes the interview – what s/he wants to convey to the public – and the way the information provided by you is to be used (in case of a recorded interview). Moreover, logistical details should be clarified with the reporter (when, where, how will the discussion take place, etc.).

You should be aware that, at least until June 2006, the press speculated on various answers from the authorities regarding the bird flu epidemics in order to prove their inefficiency in coping with the situation, even though the measures had actually been right and justified. Therefore, it is all the more important to have data on the reporter interviewing you and prepare messages to counter any such situation.

On the other hand, any interview is a good opportunity for you to convey those messages that you think the population really needs. *Your purpose* has to be clearly determined before embarking on any other activity in preparation of the interview.

Thus, if no bird flu cases have been reported in your community, you might think of preparing the population for such an event and provide them with information on how to detect a sick bird and especially what authorities to contact and how. You might want to inform them on how to prevent bird flu from passing on to humans or you might think of a local initiative for protection against bird flu – for instance, materials to be distributed to locals, etc. Another possible purpose of the interview would be to launch a warning signal with regard to factors that enhance the risk of a bird flu outbreak – e.g. the poultry is not properly isolated in the courtyard, etc.

If bird flu cases have been reported in your community, you might want to paint the general picture for the locals. On the other hand, you might encourage citizens not to conceal any cases that might occur in the vicinity of the outbreak or in other areas. You might try to obtain public opinion support for implementing certain quarantine measures, or you might want to reassure community members as concerns existing risks, etc. Of course, your purpose should be in line with the actual situation on site, at the time of the interview, and with the need for support from the population.

Step 2

Define the target audience for your messages. If a bird flu outbreak is reported in your city / commune, you should be aware that the target audience will be divided at least into the following groups:

- Persons affected directly by bird flu: persons whose households are affected by the disease, as well as their relatives and neighbors in the community. These persons might not necessarily understand what is going on with them and the reasons for which the measures are being taken. Regardless of their attitude, at this point in

time they are “entitled” to feel frightened or even aggressed.

- Persons driven by the spirit of solidarity with those affected by bird flu and opposing the measures taken by the authorities.
- Persons driven by the spirit of solidarity with those affected by bird flu, yet supporting the measures taken by the authorities.
- Neutral persons, who are either not familiar with the situation, are undecided or merely indifferent.

Your speech should prove a sense of solidarity with the affected persons – both from a human point of view and the position you are holding – yet in reality you will not be focusing on this group, which is usually quite small. On the other hand, you should not aggressively counter the arguments of those attacking you by letting yourself be dragged in senseless polemics – opponents are not the target group of your speech (although you should have in mind that a reporter often formulates his/her questions based on what opponents or detractors say!).

In reality, your speech should target the last category mentioned above, namely that of undecided persons or who are indifferent to the issue plaguing the community. This is the category that can easily migrate either to the supporters of your interventions, or to those considering that such interventions are useless and inefficient, etc. These persons are usually the most numerous, so that winning them over on your side can really make a difference between a favorable and unfavorable public opinion. If, in the end, it turns out that this segment has not been influenced in any way whatsoever, it means that your interview was useless.

Step 3

Define the main concerns of your target audience. Determine the actual needs of your target group. What information or reassurance its members need in order to be open-minded to your messages or what are the barriers keeping the population from acting in a certain manner. Thus, the formulated messages might very well strike a chord. Keep in mind at all times that the people’s needs and barriers, motivations and intentions related to a certain thing are much more influenced by attitudes and convictions than by the raw information such persons hold.

Thus, as far as risks are concerned, people find it easier to accept some risks and harder to accept others. The table below shows, by comparison, several situations when the same risk can be perceived as more or less acceptable, depending on the way in which it is introduced.

Risks perceived as being...	are more easily accepted than those perceived as being...
...voluntary	...imposed
...under one’s own control	...under somebody else’s control

...with a clear-cut benefit	...with no benefit whatsoever
...uniformly distributed	...non-uniformly distributed
...of natural origins	...human induced
...with a certain statistical incidence	...catastrophic, affecting the entire population
...familiar	...exotic, unknown
...addressed to adults	...addressed to children

Step 4

Create the messages you wish to convey during the interview. Create three proactive messages (base), and then formulate several support messages (or points of view) for each base message.

Remember: **your purpose is to be the message conveyor, not merely a person answering questions!**

Being a message conveyor means:

- Knowing your messages;
- Starting from wherever you want;
- Conveying your messages in a consistent manner;
- Doing everything possible to include them in the interview;
- Going beyond the answers to the questions; answer them, yet keep in mind to go back to your messages.

Preparing a message

Step 1: clear structuring of the message

A good message should answer the following questions:

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

How?

A radio-TV message should not exceed 5-20 seconds (the average length of a clip is 30 seconds). The equivalent in the written media is a message of three lines at most.

Anticipate the way in which reporters write the news.

Messages should be:

- concise (12-24 words);
- easy to remember (plain words);
- positive (highlight the affirmative).

Review and simplify your messages to keep them concise, intelligible and relevant to your target audience.

Step 2 – constructing a theme meant to unify the messages.

For instance: "we act to the community's benefit", "we build bridges", etc. Think of a subject or an "image word" to frame the messages in a memorable manner. Your messages will become a harmonious and unitary whole by underlining a theme throughout the interview. The theme (subject) should be predominant in the interview.

Examples of such themes:

"undertaking responsibility";

"we confide in you";

"think globally; act locally", etc.

Step 3 – formulating a statement of position

Draw up a statement of position setting the framework or the guidelines for the interview. During the interview, try to introduce the statement of position within the first 30 seconds. It usually defines the issue at stake or the essence of your stance.

Start the interview from where you feel more comfortable, not from where the first question is trying to lead you. Examples of support phrases and sentences:

- general sentences helping you make a start. For instance: "The key to controlling the transmission of bird flu to humans is keeping the bird epidemics under control. Containing such an epidemic may call for measures..."
- sentences introducing the message from your perspective or from your target audience's perspective, such as: "Many citizens might be affected if we do not take all necessary measures swiftly. And these measures...."
- locating the issue in the broader context. For instance: "The issue at stake is of an overwhelming importance to the entire world health. Mankind cannot run the risk of facing a pandemic likely to result into 40 million casualties. That is why we need to take all measures..."
- accepted by the target audience as reasonable, such as: "Sacrificing all birds within the outbreak practically eliminates any further infection risk. The faster this is done, the more protected community members and neighboring household will be. This is the explanation for the measures...."
- lay the necessary groundwork for pursuing your own message. Example: "we are examining all possible options at this point in time. Although the law gives us the right, we do not confiscate properties for payment default, but because..."

Step 4 – shaping the messages in order to render them more attractive and enhance their impact

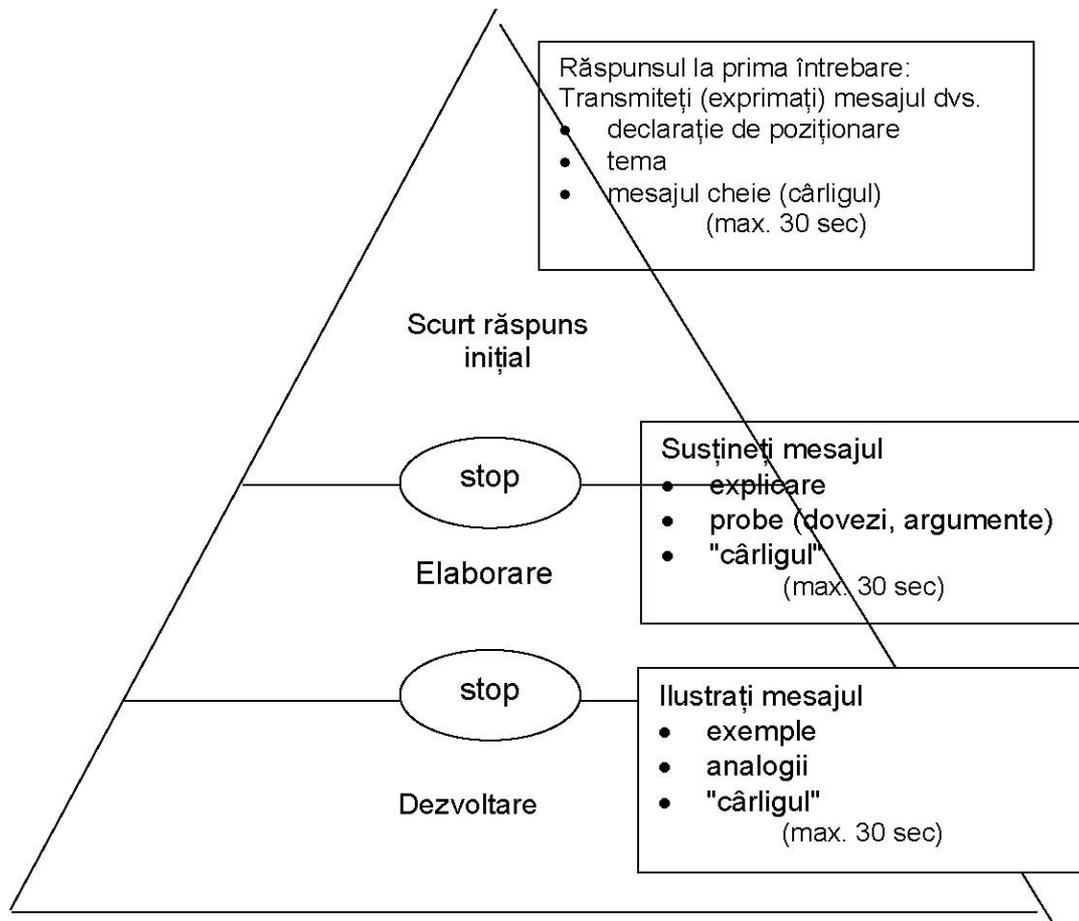
The same message may yield a different impact depending on the actual way in which it is formulated. Although the information contained therein is the same, it may be disclosed either in an impersonal manner, or it can become both expressive and captivating by resorting to miscellaneous figures of speech. Do not be afraid to shape your message so that it might come to life! Search for examples, comparisons and valuable quotations in order to make the interview more interesting, alive, and to make sure that your messages will survive the (post)editing process. Beware! Figures of speech should not overburden the message, but just confer it strength and dynamism!

B. The unfolding of the interview

Giving an interview is not an easy job, but you will see that there is nothing to worry about with a little practice. Here are some pieces of advice on certain elements that should be taken into account during the interview.

McLoughlin's feather

One of the difficult elements during an interview is how to efficiently structure the answers to the reporter's questions. McLoughlin has come up with a solution, "McLaughlin's feather" being essentially an image depicting a possible approach to an interview. The core idea is to refrain from filling every answer with burdensome details (which can become tiresome). A successful interview means that you have conveyed your messages in an animated dialogue. This method encourages reporters to follow your ideas, so that you keep the interview agenda under control.



Answer the first question:
Convey (express) your message

- statement of position
- theme
- key message (hook)
(maximum 30 seconds)

Brief initial answer

Support the message

- explanation
 - evidence (proof, arguments)
 - "the hook"
(maximum 30 seconds)
- Formulate
- Illustrate the message
- examples
 - analogies
 - "the hook"
(maximum 30 seconds)
- Develop

Explaining the feather:

1. Brief initial answer (expressing the base message): the tip of the feather is a brief answer to the first question. It may be either a phrase ensuring the broader context or a subject (theme) underlining the key message. If interrupted, you have already conveyed the intended message! The initial answer should not exceed 30 seconds (5-6 sentences - 20-30 words). It is recommended not to provide too many details at this point in time, but rather encourage the reporter to follow you on a pre-established path by coming up with a "hook".

A "hook" is a word or a sentence, such as "however, new data are available", meant to intrigue the reporter enough to formulate the following question (implied by you) – “what sort of data are you referring to?”

2. Formulating (supporting the message): the brief initial answer is followed by your details and explanations. This may include key facts, statistics, explaining the reasons for the necessary interventions. Persuade your viewers, listeners or readers via support matters (issues) directly related to their lives; explain why you made the initial statement or what the meaning of your initial answer is.

3. Developing the message (illustrating the subject): either supply additional evidence (proof) in support, or couple the prepared analogy or example so as to illustrate your words.

Example: "Thus, upon finding any cases of disease amid the poultry, the household owner should immediately report to the authorities".

Analogy: "In this case, failure to report is like finding a bomb in your courtyard and waiting to see what happens, instead of calling in the specialists. Every second gone by can mean losses both in terms of money and even in terms of human lives".

You can also introduce another brief support message: “the authorities will swiftly intervene to close the outbreak and eliminate all risks”.

Placing messages in short segments or quotations

Unless the interview is a live show, in most cases your message will be abridged to a 5-10 sec. segment during a radio/TV newflash, or to a 1-3 line quote in the written media. It goes without saying that you cannot force a reporter to quote you in a positive or negative manner. All you can do is ask him/her to use a quote or a short segment reinforcing your message. Hence, the key to conveying your messages via news articles

is to prepare a couple of irresistible quotes and try to use them during the interview.

What are the features of an irresistible quote?

- It is brief: "The issue is not whether we have to act, but how fast we can do it!"
- It is self-sufficient (independent from the rest of the text): "To conclude, concerning the risk of a pandemic: tomorrow may depend on the way we act today!"
- It employs day-to-day language, not the jargon: "Let me tell you where we stand: we cannot run the risk of spreading the virus".
- It employs a "colorful" or metaphoric language (a metaphor of everyday life, or changing the meaning of a sentence): "he who sows the wind reaps the tempest".
- It is passionate or energetic: "We shall be covered in shame unless we show some compassion towards these people", or "This is a wake-up call for the entire community before other people are hit".

Avoiding any quotes out of the context

Quotes out of the context can be genuine "comments ending a career". In order to keep something like this from happening, try to abide by the following rules:

- Be 100% coherent. If a single line/word appears to contradict your stated position, this could turn against you as a quote out of the context that completely changes its meaning;
- Avoid any improvised comments; the higher the degree of improvising, the more likely the reporters' speculations.
- Prepare self-sufficient quotes, independent from the subject (question), so that the audience does not have to base its understanding on the question. For instance, if you say "This is a matter of fair play...", the audience will not know what you are referring to and the quote will become unusable.
- Repeat the quotes and the key-messages. Each time you repeat them, there is a higher chance of seeing them introduced in the article. However, do not give the impression of repeating them ostentatiously.
- Try not to let yourselves lured into the trap, by repeating "bait words" launched by the reporter in the question (words with a negative emotional charge), such as: "greed", "guilt", "crime" etc. Once you have repeated the word, it becomes a quote out of the context.

Using bridges

If you feel that the reporter is drifting away from the issue at stake, remedy the situation by using the so-called "**bridges**". These are actually connecting phrases aimed at bringing the discussion back in your area of interest / your message.

Examples of bridges:

"Let's look at it from a broader perspective..."

"There is another, more important concern, and that is...."

"Let us not overlook the fundamental issue here..."

"There's another interesting issue..."

"You are thinking of an issue of the same importance? And that is..."

"This is not the actual issue. The real issue at stake here is..."

Using bridges with your messages:

- use all available means to your own benefit;
- imagine the bridge as a smooth rotation mechanism, not as a sudden turn for the intended direction;
- keep an honest tone;
- always answer at least one of the issues raised in the reporter's question;
- do not ignore critical comments in an obvious manner, but on the other hand avoid repeating bait words;
- answer briefly and launch the bridge to your message;
- your ultimate purpose is to convey messages, not to answer questions.

Specific elements regarding TV appearances

Television is by far the main information means for average people making up the public opinion. Taking into account the fact that television shapes their opinions, you should have it in mind when preparing a public information plan or strategy, all the more so that messages conveyed via television are better received given that they address two human senses at the same time, i.e. sight and hearing.

Research shows that most people only remember 7% of what you say. Conversely, the general impression will be given by your voice, facial expression, gestures, as well as your personal charm and credibility during the interview. To prove this, think of an interview recently seen on TV. What do you remember? Obviously, part of the contents, but mainly elements related to the interviewed person's image. If you concentrate, you will notice that most of the messages you remember are directly related to the tone of voice, gestures, self-confidence, etc. You will remember this image for a long time. In televised interviews, approximately 55% of received messages are connected to gestures, to non-verbal language, while 38% are related to tone and attitude or para-verbal language.

Here are some non-verbal communication elements perceived either positively or negatively by viewers.

Positively perceived non-verbal communication elements:

Communication element	Impact
-----------------------	--------

Excellent visual contact	honest, open, competent, empathic, dedicated, confident, familiar, interested
Sits straight on the chair	interested, enthusiastic, involved, cooperative
Open palms	open, honest
Speaks in the open air	dedicated, industrious, involved, preoccupied
Hand on the chest / heart	open, honest, dedicated
Straight vertical posture	self-confident, self-control, assertive, determined
Low voice	self-confident, honest, preoccupied

Negatively perceived non-verbal communication elements:

Communication element	Impact
Weak visual contact	dishonest, introvert, careless, nervous, liar
Sits recklessly on the chair	disinterested, lack of enthusiasm, careless, withdrawn, distant, uncooperative
Arms crossed on the chest	disinterested, careless, reckless, arrogant, anxious, defensive, furious, stubborn, intolerant
Rare movements of the hands and body	dishonest, deceitful, tense, lack of self-confidence
Hesitating moves	tense, lack of self-confidence
Walks around the room	tense, lack of self-confidence, cornered, furious, angry
Touches his face frequently / Holds his head in his hands	dishonest, deceitful, tense, tired, bored
Hidden hands	deceitful, guilty, dishonest
Speaks from behind a podium, table etc.	dishonest, deceitful, formal, withdrawn, distant, disinterested, superiority
Speaks from a higher position	superiority, dominant, spirit of criticism
Speaks from behind a desk	bureaucratic, careless, remote, distant, uninvolved
Touches and/or rubs his nose	doubt, disagreement, deceitful, tense
Touches and/or rubs his eyes	doubt, disagreement, deceitful, tense
Chews on the pencil / pinches his hands	lack of self-confidence, doubt
Jingles coins in his pocket	nervous, lack of self-confidence and self-control, deceitful (suggestion: empty your pockets beforehand)
Clears his voice repeatedly	nervous, lack of self-confidence
Taps the table with his fingers, moves his legs, sudden moves	nervous, hostile, anxious, impatient, bored
Rests his head in his hands	bored, tired, frustrated
Clutched fists	furious, hostile, uncooperative
Crossed ankles / clutched hands	deceitful, apprehensive, edgy, tense, aggressive
Palm at the back of his neck	frustration, anger, irritation, hostility
Tight lips	nervous, deceitful, furious, hostile
Bites his lips	nervous, deceitful

Blinks frequently	nervous, deceitful, careless
Fallen posture	intimidated, weak self-control
Angry voice	nervous, deceitful, hostile
Shrugs his shoulders	uninvolved, indifferent

Direct communication with the population

Visits in the community, occasioned by certain situations with potentially negative effects on the population, such as a bird flu outbreak, may yield several benefits in relation to your image and the impact on community members.

Benefits for you:

- you will prove that both you and the authorities have given a prompt response to crisis situations;
- you will show solidarity with affected community members, proving that you care;
- you will be able to contradict any erroneous message about what happened on site – “I could personally see that...”;
- you can invite several reporters to gather documentation on the field on how the authorities are acting (after making sure that everything is OK on site), thus showing transparency and openness to the information needs of the press and of the population. Moreover, an on-site interview with you would prove to the entire community that you are deeply committed to public health issues.

Benefits to the population:

- affected persons will feel that somebody cares, and the negative impact of losing their birds and the fear of disease will be somewhat offset by the fact that they got your attention and interest;
- the community will be reassured, seeing that the authorities are familiar with the situation up to the highest hierarchical level and that all necessary measures are taken to contain the spread of the infection;
- your personal example and messages will weigh heavier in the people’s eyes than those conveyed by other persons. Thus, you should encourage affected persons and their neighbors to immediately notify the authorities in case of new outbreaks, if anyone starts showing flu signs and symptoms, you should recommend that they wash their hands thoroughly, etc.

During a visit

1. First and foremost, earn the people’s trust. Be polite. Use phrases such as “I know how you feel” or “I understand”. Put yourself on the same level as the respective family.
2. Tell people about the efforts to contain the infection. Try to provide plain and simple explanations. Do not give too many technical information, but clearly

explain what measures can be taken against bird flu and why everybody should take part in this joint effort.

3. Hand out fliers (if available) so that family members might read them afterwards; even for those who cannot read, such materials will remind them of your visit, while pupils or other persons in the family can read the brochures to them.
4. Ask for participation and support. Tell them over and over again that it is in their power to help protect the entire community. Thank them for their time and cooperation.

Always:

- Be calm – people might get scared and confused. Be patient.
- Listen carefully – listen more than you talk and answer their concerns empathetically.
- Motivate people – tell your interlocutors that intervention is essential in order to contain the bird flu expansion.
- Repeat the messages – through their intervention, people can protect themselves, their families and neighbors.
- Be honest – If you do not know the answer to a certain question, tell them you will contact them for an accurate answer.

Never:

- Throw a temper and look impatient.
- Use phrases such as “you are wrong”, “what proof of ignorance”.
- Blame the family.
- Shake your head in a disapproving manner when voicing an opinion.
- Answer a question when you don’t really know the answer.
- Threaten the family.
- Behave arrogantly and insult the family.
- Take notes – may trigger a sense of anxiety.

Statements you can use when interacting with families on bird flu:

- As it happened in other countries, bird flu is now a problem in our country, as well.
- Any person coming in contact with sick or dead birds is exposed to the risk of getting bird flu. One can never know for sure when a bird has the flue or anything else, so it’s better to take precautionary measures. Some birds, such as ducks, may very well not exhibit any symptoms whatsoever.
- From what we know so far, it seems that bird flu is not transmitted among humans.
- The infected birds’ excrements, blood, saliva and nasal secretions may carry the virus, which can survive for several hours on various surfaces (and several days

out in the open). The virus is destroyed only by boiling and using soap or detergent.

- Each individual should participate in everyone's protection against the spread of the disease.

Five actions to mitigate the risk of getting avian flu from birds:

1. Avoid any direct contact with birds
 - Keep children away from all birds and do not let them collect eggs, as far as possible.
 - Never let birds inside.
2. Do not touch sick or dead birds – notify the authorities immediately
 - Upon finding sick or dead birds, touch them only if wearing gloves or a plastic bag.
 - Do not sacrifice and do not cook sick or dead birds.
 - If you develop a fever within three to seven days after coming in contact with a sick or dead bird, see the physician.
3. Comply with strict hygiene rules
 - Wash your hands with water and soap every time you come in contact with birds and at all times before eating. Water should be fresh – it should be thrown after using.
 - Rinse eggs immediately after collecting them and before placing them next to other food items.
 - Wash your hands with water and soap before and after handling chicken meat – particularly before and after cooking. Rinse any cooking utensils that have touched raw meat before using them on other food items.
 - Wear gloves and a protective towel / cloth / handkerchief on the mouth when cleaning up any poultry premises – bird excrements, fodder or feathers may be infected with the bird flu virus.
4. Cook the eggs and chicken meat for a long time before consuming them
 - Eggs should be hardboiled.
 - Chicken meat should be well cooked (without any pink parts).
5. Be careful when going to farms, to the market or in any other areas where birds are kept
 - Wash your hands with water and soap before entering and after exiting an area with live poultry.
 - Brush and disinfect the clothes, the footwear and the wheels of bicycles / motorcycles / any other vehicles after leaving the area, especially before going indoors, so as to remove any trace of excrements or dust.

Glossary of terms

Public health risk

The possibility of an event occurring with adverse consequences on human health, especially when likely to spread internationally or when posing a direct and serious threat.

Incidence rate

The percentage of population affected by a certain disease within a given time span (1 year).

Zoonosis

Animal infection that may also affect humans.

Epidemic / Pandemic

Unexpected number of cases in humans / international spread of the disease.

Epizooty / Panzooty

Unexpected number of cases in humans / international spread of the disease.

Human quarantine

Restrictions in the activities and/or confinement of apparently healthy persons, yet likely to have been infected or contaminated.

Isolation

The action of separating a sick person from the healthy ones, in order to prevent a disease from spreading. Isolation can be done in hospitals or at home.

Cluster

An agglomeration of cases over a short time and in the same geographical location (country, city, street, school, etc.).

Stage 3 WHO

Cases of bird flu in humans following exposure to sick birds, yet no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

Case definition (WHO)

Acute respiratory syndrome (coughing and/or dyspnea)

Hyperthermia over 38⁰C **which occur**

in an individual returning from an area with confirmed human cases (www.oie.int)

or

in an individual who, 7 days before the clinical onset, had a prolonged / repeated contact at less than 1 meter with: living or dead birds, bird dejections, confirmed H5N1 human case.

WHO

World Health Organization.

Bibliography and other sources

1. Bland, Michael; Theaker, Alison; Wragg, David – Effective Media Relations: How to Get Results, The Institute of Public Relations, PR in Practice Series, Kogan Page, London, first published in 1996, reprinted in 1998, ISBN 0-7494-1856-7
2. Mircea, Dan; Tehnici de Relații Publice (PR Techniques), SNSPA, Bucharest 2004
3. Stan, Valentin; Relații Publice (Public Relations), SNSPA, Bucharest 2004
4. INCDMI Cantacuzino – Basic: weekly update bulletin
5. Ministry of Public Health (MPH) - www.ms.ro
6. Center for Diseases Control Atlanta (CDC) - www.cdc.gov
7. World Health Organization (WHO) - www.who.int/en
8. European Center for Disease Control (ECDC) - www.ecdc.eu.int
9. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) – www.fao.org
10. World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) – www.oie.int

Pre-test

- 1. Name three signs of avian flu in birds.**
- 2. How is avian flu transmitted among birds?**
- 3. Name three measures to be taken by bird owners when finding sick birds.**
- 4. How can humans get infected with the bird flu virus?**
- 5. What are the signs of the disease in humans?**
- 6. Name six measures ensuring protection against bird flu in humans?**
- 7. What are the tasks of the local epizootic committee?**
- 8. Name the three types of quarantine in case of animal disease.**
- 9. What is the compensation procedure for sacrificed birds?**
- 10. List the practical steps to be taken by a mayor in case of a bird flu outbreak.**

Post-test

- 1. Name three signs of avian flu in birds.**
- 2. How is avian flu transmitted among birds?**
- 3. Name three measures to be taken by bird owners when finding sick birds.**
- 4. How can humans get infected with the bird flu virus?**
- 5. What are the signs of the disease in humans?**
- 6. Name six measures ensuring protection against bird flu in humans?**
- 7. What are the tasks of the local epizootic committee?**
- 8. Name the three types of quarantine in case of animal disease.**
- 9. What is the compensation procedure for sacrificed birds?**
- 10. List the practical steps to be taken by a mayor in case of a bird flu outbreak.**

Workshop assessment

- 1. How would you rate this workshop overall?**
(from 1 to 10, 1 – the lowest, 10 – the highest)
- 2. Which was the most interesting and useful session?**
- 3. Which was the least interesting and useful session?**
- 4. What other topics are you interested in?**
- 5. How do you think this workshop was organized?**
- 6. Other suggestions, recommendations, comments.**

Bird flu



What is bird flu

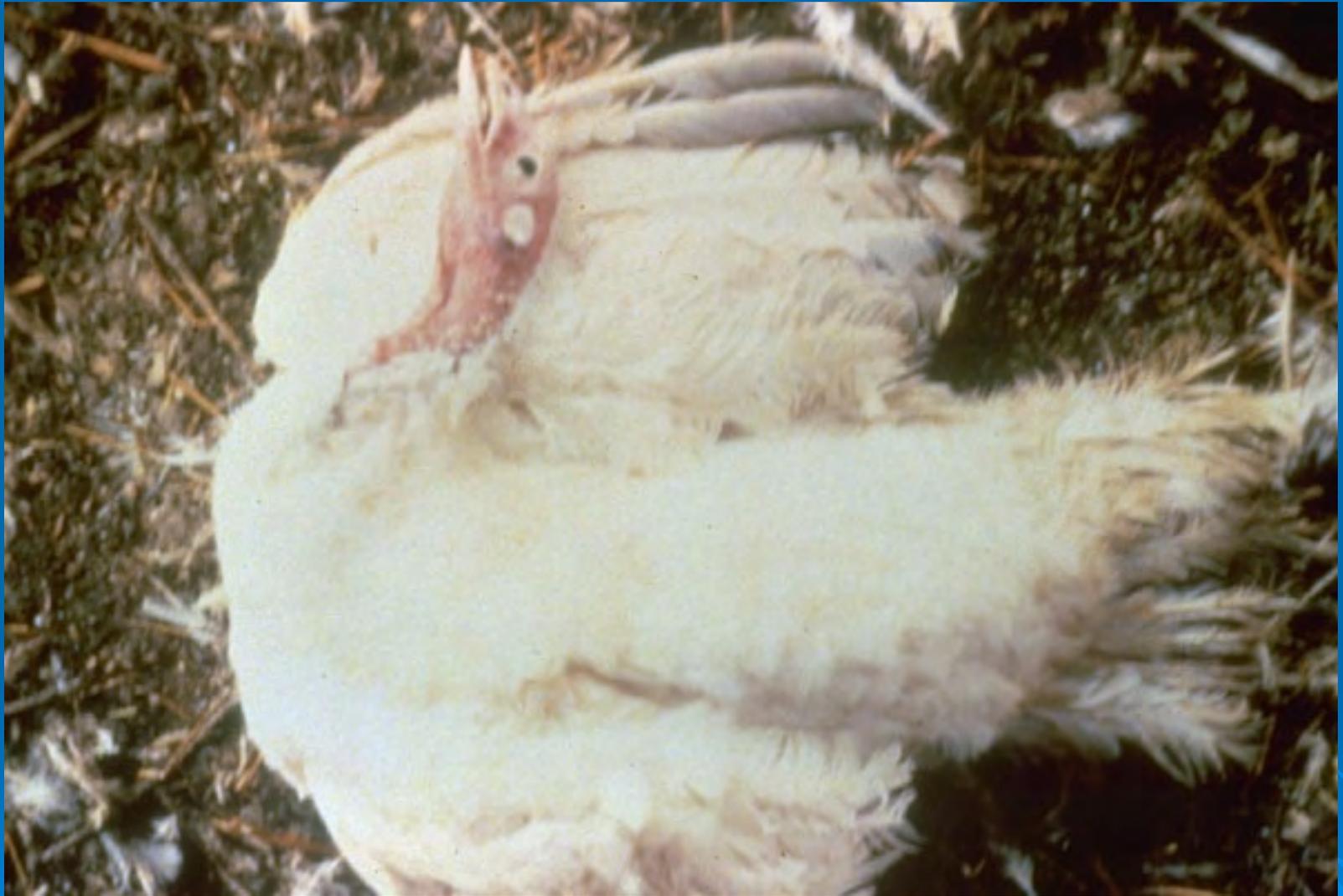


- It is a disease caused by a virus, that infects turkeys, hens, pheasants, partridges, ducks and geese, water and migrating birds.
- The disease spreads quickly and it affects a large number of birds.
- Migrating birds (and especially aquatic birds) are considered to be the natural virus reservoir of bird flu.
- The disease is transmitted from migratory birds, sick birds, the carcasses, secretions and excretions of infected birds, as well as water, fodder, equipment, shelters and transport means that have come into contact with the virus.
- The closer the contact between infected and healthy birds, the higher the chances of the disease being transmitted directly.

What are its symptoms

- Sick birds stop eating, they crouch with their wings down, crest and chin are swollen, dark red or have blue stains on their legs and secretions are flowing through their peck and nostrils.
- Their head and the neck are swollen, colored in violet, birds can no longer breathe, they suffer from diarrhea, and their heads might start trembling, resulting in their necks twisting and in the bird becoming paralyzed.







What should bird owners do

- REPORT ANY CASE OF ANIMAL DISEASE OR DEATH TO THE VETERINARIAN;
- AVOID TOUCHING THE CARCASSES BARE-HANDED ;
- KEEP THE BIRDS LOCKED IN SHELTERS, SO AS TO AVOID ANY CONTACT WITH BIRDS FROM OTHER HOUSEHOLDS OR WITH WILD BIRDS;
- KEEP DUCKS AND GEESE AWAY FROM PONDS OR LAKES;
- **KEEP CHILDREN FROM PLAYING WITH POULTRY, WILD BIRDS OR BIRD CARCASSES!!!**
- GRANT THEIR ENTIRE SUPPORT TO THE SANITARY (HUMAN AND VETERINARIAN) PERSONNEL AND TO THE AUTHORITIES IN CHARGE;
- THE DOCTORS' MISSION IS TO TEND TO HUMAN AND ANIMAL HEALTH.

What should farm bird breeders do

FARM BIRD BREEDERS SHOULD
ABIDE BY THE BIO-SECURITY NORMS
AND PROVIDE THEIR ENTIRE
SUPPORT TO VETS AND STATE
AUTHORITIES



What should consumers do

- PURCHASE MEAT, EGGS AND CHICKEN PRODUCTS FROM AUTHORIZED STORES ONLY
- THERE IS NO DANGER WHATSOEVER IN WELL-COOKED MEAT AND HARDBOILED EGGS
- WASH YOUR HANDS WITH WATER AND SOAP EVERY TIME YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH MEAT, EGGS AND CHICKEN PRODUCTS!
- WASH KITCHEN UTENSILS WITH DETERGENT AFTER USE

Measures to control and fight the disease

- Killing and destroying all birds within the infected farm / household;
- Performing the first disinfection;
- Further clinical supervision through specific tests among birds in neighboring areas;
- Farm / household owners should stay with the team killing / destroying the birds and performing the disinfection until completion of the action;
- The entrance / exit of persons in / from the farm / household will be possible subject to decontamination (particularly the footwear) and inspection through a decontamination and control filter;
This inspection is aimed at preventing the removal of any animals, biological materials or other possibly contaminated objects from the outbreak.

If the rapid test is followed by confirmation via the PCR analysis bulletin, confine the area and take specific outbreak measures:

- kill and destroy birds, any products and sub-products thereof, complying with the environment protection and bio-security measures;
- disinfect the shelters, courtyards, streets, alleys, etc.;
- sanitary-veterinarian filter (decontamination and control) for the movement of persons and transport means to / from the outbreak.

Movement restrictions for persons and transport means shall be in force until completely eliminating the disease.

Measures to control and fight the disease

Determine the protection area – a radius of at least 3 kilometers.

Determine the surveillance area – a radius of at least 10 kilometers.

Destroy all materials, fodder and waste likely to have been contaminated.

Identify all processing, storage, incubation and transport units that have come into contact with products from the concerned farm / household.

Perform the second disinfection.

Perform the third disinfection.

Introduce sentinel birds within 14 days from the third disinfection.

Repopulation shall occur at least 21 days after completion of all actions and testing the health condition of sentinel birds.

Remove restrictions and declare the outbreak closed if lab results are negative.

VERY IMPORTANT!!

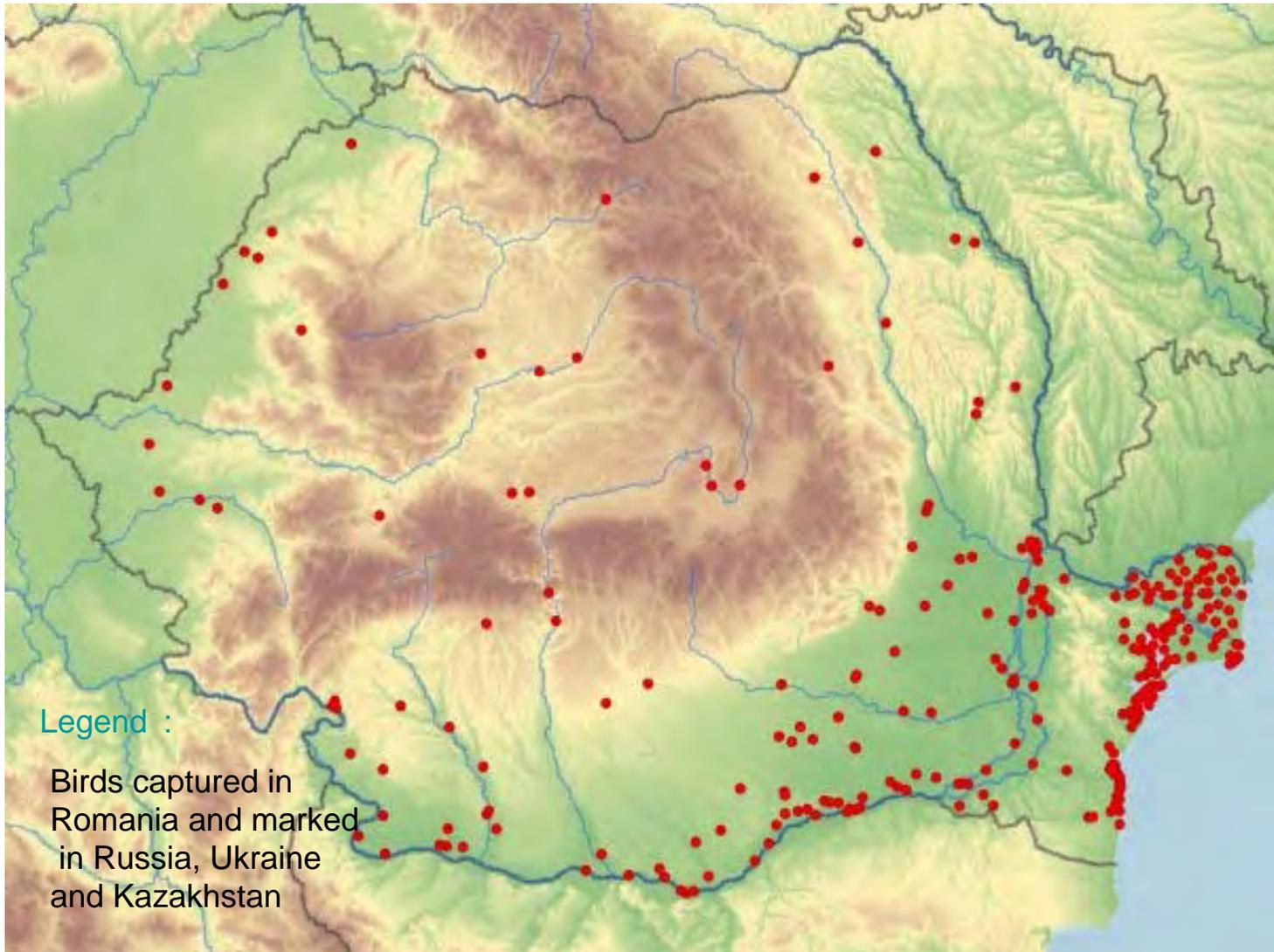
- ❖ Romania is a country where numerous bird flu outbreaks have been reported, yet **no cases of human infection!**

This is due both to the efficient measures taken by the authorities and to the

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING OF CITIZENS!

- ❖ Bird flu is present worldwide, we are not the only ones fighting this disease.
- ❖ The virus source is out in the wild environment, therefore other bird flu outbreaks are still possible.

WILD BIRDS



Other general measures

- Ensuring permanent supervision of the healthy bird status by conducting clinical examinations;
 - Active supervision of the wild birds;
 - Intensifying bio-safety measures;
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several sets of concentric circles in various shades of blue, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

THANK YOU !



BIRD FLU

Infection risk for humans

Session objectives

- At the end of this session, participants will be familiar with:
 - the evolution of human influenza worldwide;
 - the risk of getting the bird flu virus and how serious the infection is;
 - the way in which the bird flu virus is transmitted to humans and symptomatology;
 - measures for preventing and containing the number of human diseases;
 - the correct use of certain reference terms.

Definitions (1)

- **Epizooty:**

An epidemic spreading to various animal species.

- **Zoonosis:**

Animal infection that may also affect humans

- **Epidemic:**

Infectious disease affecting at the same time a large number of population within the same geographical area

- **Pandemic:**

Epidemic affecting a large number of population throughout the world

Definitions (2)



Seasonal flu

(Human disease)



Expected in the cold season



Human case of bird flu

(Zoonosis)



Isolated cases in Asia



Flu pandemic

(Zoonosis developing into a human disease)



Could break out anytime

Flu pandemic

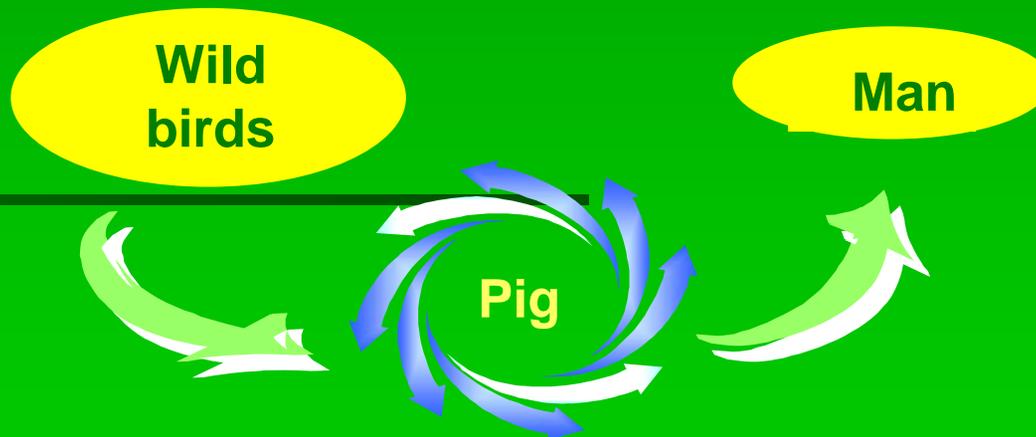
Breaks out every 10-40 years (3 - 4 pandemics in a century)

- When type A flu virus modifies its structure
- Humans lack the antibodies (protection) to fight the new virus
- Affects 25-50% of the population worldwide
- Affects healthy adults
- Large number of deaths and complications

Hypotheses on the pandemic mechanism

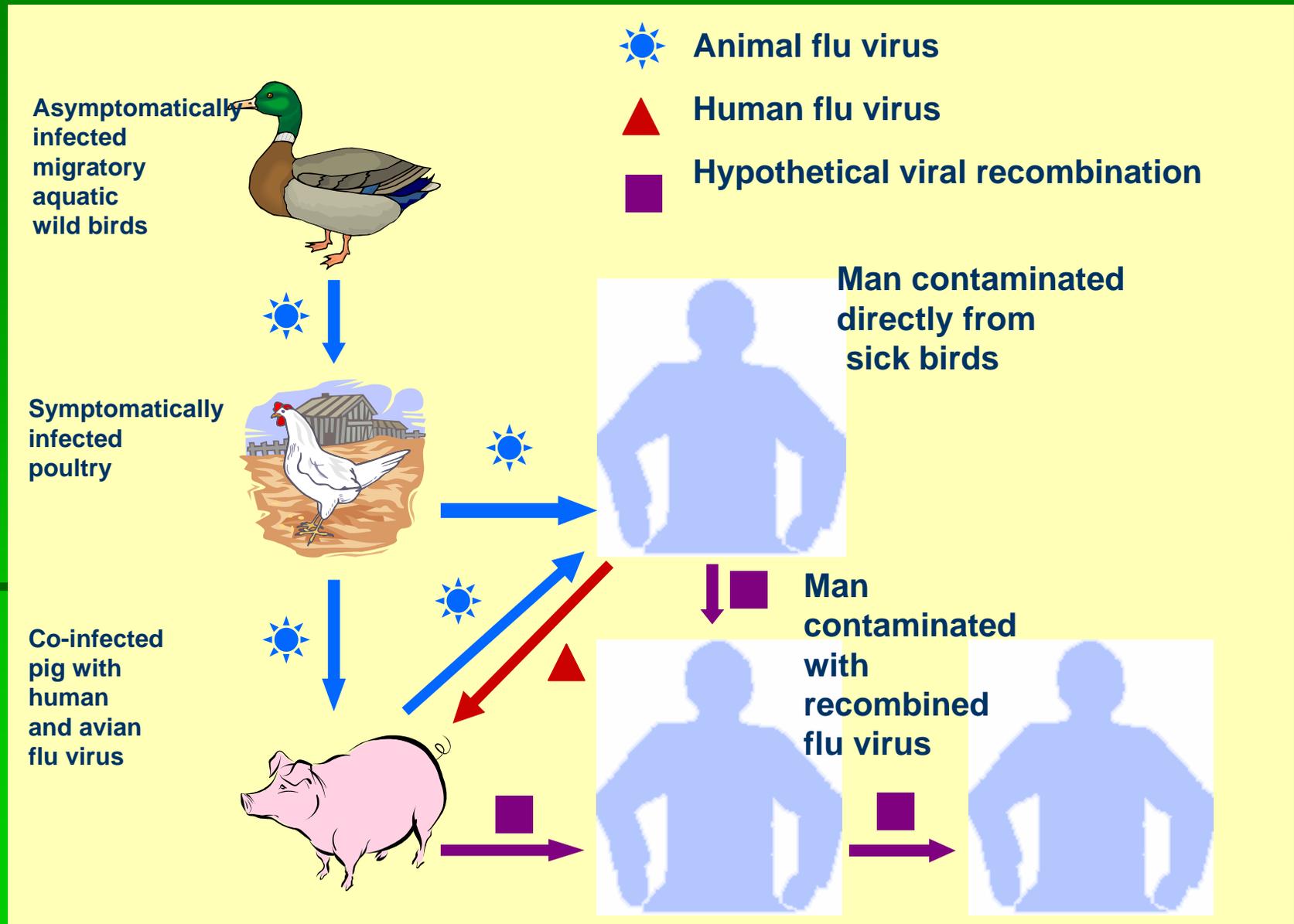
- Genetic recombinations between human and avian flu viruses.
- Human flu viruses are not transmitted to birds and vice versa.
- Pig or man = host of the genetic recombination between human and avian flu viruses.
- Favored by: poverty / promiscuousness (man - animals)

?



**South China:
Starting point of all pandemics?**

Ways of transmission to humans



Bird flu incidence

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		Total	
	No. of cases	No. of fatalities								
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	8	5
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	6	6
China	0	0	0	0	8	5	10	7	18	12
Djibouti	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Egypt	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	6	14	6
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	17	11	32	26	49	37
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
Thailand	0	0	17	12	5	2	0	0	22	14
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	12	4
Vietnam	3	3	29	20	61	19	0	0	93	42
Total	3	3	46	32	95	41	81	52	225	128

Risk of the H5N1 virus being transmitted to humans

- Considered extremely low, yet...
- In 2006 human cases were reported in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Egypt and Iraq
- The risk is higher in case of households with poultry and other domestic animals

Risk of the H5N1 virus being transmitted to humans

- Infections occurred following exposure to high doses of virus, originating from sick poultry in individual households
- There is no evidence that the virus is transmissible through simple contact with sick wild birds
- Human-to-human transmission was reported in a family (7 cases) in Indonesia in 2006, yet this is an isolated occurrence

Bird flu in humans

- Affects mainly healthy children and adults (unlike human flu, which is more frequently reported at extreme ages and in persons with chronic conditions)
- Incubation:
 - Average: 2-8 days (WHO: 7 days)
 - Longer than seasonal human flu (1-3 days)

Bird flu in humans – symptoms

- High fever $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ (94–100% of cases)
- Headaches / muscular pains (30–50% of cases)
- Coughing / difficult breathing (67-100% of cases)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, stomachaches (30-50% of cases)
- Chest pains
- Nose / gum bleeding
- Seldom: the upper respiratory system is affected (50-60% of cases)
- Quite rare – conjunctivitis (# H7)
- Evolves rapidly

Evolution

- **Mortality:**

- 50% of committed / confirmed patients
- Higher among children and young adults???
- Thailand: 90% mortality rate among youngsters under 15

- **Death occurs:**

- ┌ Average: 9-10 days after the debut
- ┌ Limits: 6-30 days

Prevention measures (1)

- Wash your hands with water and soap on a regular basis, obligatorily before meals
- Do not touch any sick or dead birds, be they domestic or wild
- Do not touch the birds' feathers, excrements or blood

Prevention measures (2)

- Eggs should be washed with water immediately after buying or collecting them from the nest;
- Cook the eggs and chicken meat for a long time before consuming them;
- The person preparing chicken meat should wash his/her hands with water and soap before touching any other raw food item.

Prevention measures (3)

- Any sick or dead bird in unclear circumstances should be reported to the authorities at once;
- Any person that touched a sick bird within the last 7 days and developed: high fever, coughing, difficult breathing, deteriorated general condition, should see the physician at once.

Prevention measures (4)

- **Post-exposure prophylaxis (medical staff, persons that came into contact with sick birds):**
 - Oseltamivir (TAMIFLU): 75 mg/day x 7-10 days, within the first 48h

TAMIFLU – not a vaccine

Annual anti-flu vaccination

- **Composition:**

- 3 different virus strains
- Modified each year (WHO)

- **Not active against bird flu viruses**

- **Further recommendations in case of bird flu outbreaks:**

- └ Vaccination of the staff in charge of sacrificing the birds, so as to limit the risk of recombination
- └ Vaccination of the population in the affected areas

Recommendations for anti-flu vaccination (1)

- **Senior citizens (65+)**
- **Persons at risk for serious forms of flu:**
 - Chronic bronchopulmonary conditions: BPOC, mucoviscidosis, etc.
 - Chronic cardiac conditions
 - Severe chronic nephropathies
 - Diabetes
 - Cellular immunity deficit
 - HIV infection

Recommendations for anti-flu vaccination (2)

- **Institutionalized persons (senior citizen homes, orphanages)**
- **Children and teenagers (6 months - 18 years):**
 - Under chronic treatment with aspirin
 - Kawasaki syndrome
- **Persons that might pass on the flu to individuals at risk for severe forms:**
 - ▮ medical staff
 - ▮ transports / tourism personnel

Pandemic vaccine - stages

- Pandemic strain deceleration: 1 - 6 months
- Selection and preparation of vaccine strains: 1-2 months
- Manufacturing: 1 month = 1 million doses
- Efficiency and safety control: 1-3 months
- Distribution

Total length: 4 - 8 months

Attitude towards a suspicious bird flu human case

- Redirect to the infection disease department in charge of such cases
- **Comply with all transport rules / circuits**
- Isolate the patient in a separate room
- Nasopharyngeal / blood sample taking
- Use preset sample-taking kits + rapid transport to the laboratory
- Antiviral therapy
- Medical staff in charge exclusively of these patients
- Contact list
- Continuous disinfection

Conclusions

Bird flu epizooty records an alarming expansion rate worldwide

High risk of a pandemic viral strain

Numerous cases of H5N1 bird flu in humans have been confirmed

High degree of mortality

Human-to-human transmission has not been confirmed yet

Each country should have available / comply with a national action plan for fighting against a flu pandemic

Conclusions

Avoiding pandemic risk = control of bird epidemic + preventing human flu virus

Legislative Requirements for Fighting Bird Flu

Government actions so far

- No cases of avian flu transmitted to humans have been reported in Romania so far
- New laws have been passed in order to prevent the spread of the disease
- All levels of public administration have responsibilities as regards bird flu management

Local and national co-operation

- Important relation between local authorities and the Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority
- Cooperate for the support of official veterinarians
- The National Authority sets the obligations and the responsibilities of public administration institutions and bodies in the sanitary-veterinarian field
- The Authority may require that the central and local government authorities enforce the legal measures in case of need or imminent risk to food safety or health.

County anti-epizootic committee

- The county anti-epizootic committee shall be activated by Prefect's decision
- Members of the committee shall be persons in charge of various issues related to bird flu
- Failure by local committees to comply with the decisions issued by the county committees shall be deemed as an offence and punished by six months to one year imprisonment

The role of the anti-epizootic committee

- Periodically reviews the actual standing at county level and sets forth measures for the improvement thereof
- Establishes the general action plan for preventing and fighting epizooties
- Ensures the technical and material basis for implementing the plan
- Assesses the efficiency of the undertaken actions, by taking the required measures

Local anti-epizootic committees

- They shall be set up by decision of the local councils and presided over by the mayor
- They have the same tasks as the county-level committees to which they are subordinated
- They shall be made up of:
 - The official veterinarian
 - The heads of all sectors in charge of preventing and fighting contagious animal diseases
 - The empowered freelancer veterinarian shall serve as secretary.

Measures to be taken in case of bird flu outbreaks

- Local councils should immediately report any outbreaks to the veterinarian and take the following measures:
 - Make sure that the infected or possibly infected animals have been isolated
 - Carry out investigations on the spread of the disease and check all animals in the courtyards where the infected ones were identified
 - Interrupt the issuance of any further ownership and health certificates for animals
 - Halt or isolate any passing flocks or herds where cases of disease or suspicious animals have been identified

Other measures of the local councils

- Enforce the measures for preventing and fighting the disease
- Instate the relevant quarantine degree based on the official veterinarian's conclusions
- Enforce quarantine measures with the help of police officers
- Restrict the movement of persons and animals accordingly
- Lift quarantine restrictions based on the official sanitary-veterinarian certificate of findings.

Public information measures

- Report the occurrence of bird flu in the area through any available means
- Inform each animal owner directly and by concluding an official protocol of acknowledgement
- Non-compliance with these obligations shall be deemed as an offence and punished by one to three years' imprisonment

Responsibilities of the official veterinarian

- Examines the contaminated or suspicious animals, the meat and products from emergency-sacrificed animals, by performing an autopsy of the dead animals
- Examines other courtyards in the community
- Determines the origin of the disease and whether animals have been transported outside the affected area
- If, following investigations, the official veterinarian excludes the existence of the disease, all restrictions shall be lifted
- Informs other authorities on the occurrence of the disease
- Informs the physician if the disease is transmissible to humans

Additional Responsibilities

- Takes all measures for preventing the disease, until it is officially confirmed
- If the investigations on the disease are not relevant:
 - Isolates the animals and takes samples for lab tests
 - Sacrifices the animals in view of setting the diagnosis

What is quarantine?

- It is a complex of restrictive measures imposed on the movement of animals, humans, products of animal and vegetal origin, fodder, etc. with a view to halting the spread of animal contagious diseases
- Quarantine may be confined to a single courtyard or may be extended to groups of communes
- There are three degrees of quarantine: I, II and III
- In most cases, the quarantine imposed in case of bird flu outbreaks will be of the first degree

First-degree quarantine

- Applies to highly-contagious diseases, such as the foot-and-mouth disease and the avian flu
- Movement of all animals and humans is strictly forbidden
- Animals should be kept inside sealed shelters, while contaminated courtyards shall be placed under observation
- Entry/exit of persons in/from the territories under quarantine is strictly forbidden
- All community activities and events that might contribute to the spread of the epizooty are strictly forbidden

Second-degree quarantine

- Applies to epizooties with an average spread, such as the classical swine fever
- Movement restrictions apply solely to contaminated courtyards
- Affected animals should be kept in shelters inside the community
- Individuals may leave the outbreak subject to special disinfecting procedures

Third-degree quarantine

- Applies to diseases transmitted via direct contact with receptive animals (e.g. rabies, tuberculosis)
- Certain restrictions are imposed on the movement of sick animals
- Shall be imposed solely based on the sanitary-veterinarian certificate of findings prepared by the official veterinarian
- This is the least restrictive quarantine level

Knackery procedures

- Local councils are responsible for neutralizing animal carcasses
- Local councils shall either resort to their own duly licensed incineration plants or shall conclude service-rendering agreements with entities in charge of knackery
- Failure to comply with legal provisions shall be deemed as contravention and sanctioned by fine

Legal responsibilities of animal owners (I)

- Protect animal health
- Comply with all the laws
- Be familiar with the tasks of territorial sanitary-veterinarian units and the ways in which they apply to them
- Cooperate with all officials in case of an outbreak

Legal responsibilities of animal owners (II)

- Report to the Mayor's Office the exact number of poultry owned
- Keep all fowl within shelters or well-isolated premises
- Contact the local council within 24 hours from finding any case of sick or dead animals
- Isolate sick animals until the veterinarian's arrival and keep people away from those areas

Sanctions for breaching the obligations

- Fine ranging from RON 300 to RON 600 in case of:
 - Failure to report within 24 hours
 - Failure to isolate sick animals
 - Breaching the restrictions imposed by the veterinarian in charge
- The persons subject to sanctions shall not be entitled to indemnifications for the sacrificed poultry
- All birds found outside households shall be considered to have no owner, shall be confiscated and sacrificed without any indemnification

Hunting regulations

- It is strictly forbidden to hunt migratory and sedentary birds
- Failure to abide by this provision shall be punished by:
 - 1 to 3 years' imprisonment, or
 - fine ranging between RON 5,000 and RON 25,000

Indemnification procedures

- The owners of sacrificed animals within contaminated areas shall be indemnified
- Compensatory payments shall be made from the state budget
- The actual amount of the indemnification to be granted shall be set by an evaluation commission
- In order to be indemnified, owners should:
 - Register their fowl
 - Submit the appropriate documents

List of necessary documents to receive compensatory payments

- The documentation should include:
 - The epizootics investigation
 - The certificate of findings acknowledging the disease, issued by the official veterinarian
 - The evaluation slip prepared and signed by the evaluation commission
 - Copies of the analysis bulletins issued by the state sanitary-veterinarian laboratories
 - The official protocols issued by the official veterinarian for individual animal breeders
 - The documents attesting any amounts of money received by animal owners from sales following animal sacrificing, if applicable
 - Affidavit that the animal(s) has/have been insured, if applicable.

The responsibilities of other Romanian Ministries as regards bird flu

- Ministry of Health
- Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority
- Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism
- Ministry of Administration and the Interior

Useful contact information

- Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority
 - www.ansv.ro
- Ministry of Health
 - www.ms.ro
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development
 - www.maap.ro

Communication with the media on the bird flu issue

Why communicate with the media?

- **Well-informed media is tantamount to a well-informed and cooperative population.**
- **A favorable public opinion is essential for the success of a project based on citizen cooperation and involvement.**
- **For a person in a public position, the media should be a support, a partner, because otherwise the media would sooner or later turn into an enemy, an error hunter or a source of sarcastic comments.**

What does communication with the media imply?

- **A constant and permanent concern from the institution or the institution spokesperson to build a solid relationship with the press.**
- **In your relations with the media, you should at all times make proof of:**
 - **Honesty.**
 - **Politeness and promptness, availability and time in your relations with journalists.**
 - **Prior documentation – your answers should prove that you are well-informed on the concerned topic. If you lack the requested information, tell them you will find out and come back with an answer.**

What does communication with the media imply?

What to avoid in your relation with the media:

- refusal to talk to the press / to answer the questions**
- refusal to be quoted when asked for permission**
- the request that certain information already supplied should not be published or be published at all costs (guiding the journalist)**
 - you should be aware that anything you say to a journalist may be published**

Ways of disseminating information to the population via the media

Each institution will build its own press communication project, by resorting to its own mix of PR techniques and instruments, such as:

- Press conferences
- Debates / roundtable / workshops with the media
- Informative voyage or other initiatives helping the press gather documentation on the spot / experiment a certain thing for real: inviting the press on site for collecting data
- Delivering press releases / news etc. on a regular or occasional basis
- Interviews

Interviews

The interview for the *written press* can take the shape of:

- an audio-taped discussion, which the journalist then processes for publication;
- submitting the written questions, which the interviewed person answers in writing, as well;
- over the phone (also applicable to radio interviews).

Radio or television interviews may be live or recorded. The interview may be:

- spontaneous, when nothing is prepared beforehand;
- prepared, when all questions and answers have been prepared beforehand;
- semi-spontaneous, when the journalist and the interviewed person agree on the types of questions beforehand.

Preparing for the interview

Step 1

Define the purpose(s) of the interview:

- the interviewer's purpose**
- your own purpose, i.e. the impact you are trying to make by this public appearance and the messages you are about to convey. Your ultimate purpose is to convey what is important to the public, not to answer questions!**

Preparing for the interview

Possible purposes:

- If bird flu cases have been reported in your community, you might want to:
- paint the general picture for the locals;
- reassure community members as concerns existing risks;
- encourage citizens not to conceal any cases that might occur in the vicinity of the outbreak or in other areas;
- obtain public opinion support for implementing certain quarantine measures, a.s.o.

Your purpose should be in line with the actual situation on site, at the time of the interview, and with the need for support from the population.

Preparing for the interview

Step 2 – define the target audience

If a bird flu outbreak is reported in your city / commune, you should be aware that the target audience will be divided at least into the following groups:

- Persons affected directly by bird flu: persons whose households are affected by the disease, as well as their relatives and neighbors in the community.
- Persons driven by the spirit of solidarity with those affected by bird flu and opposing the measures taken by the authorities.
- Persons driven by the spirit of solidarity with those affected by bird flu, yet supporting the measures taken by the authorities.
- Neutral persons, who are either not familiar with the situation, are undecided or merely indifferent.

Preparing for the interview

Step 3 – understand the target audience

- Define the main concerns of your target audience, determine the actual needs of your target group, what information or reassurance its members need in order to be open-minded to your messages or what are the barriers keeping the population from acting in a certain manner.
- Keep in mind at all times that the people's needs and barriers, motivations and intentions related to a certain thing are much more influenced by attitudes and convictions than by the raw information such persons hold.

Preparing for the interview

Step 3 – understand the target audience

- As far as risks are concerned, people find it easier to accept some risks and harder to accept others. the same risk can be perceived as more or less acceptable, depending on the way in which it is introduced.

Preparing for the interview

Step 4 – develop the messages

- Create the messages you wish to convey during the interview. Create three proactive messages (base), and then formulate several support messages (or points of view) for each base message.
- Remember: **your purpose is to be the message conveyor, not merely a person answering questions!**

Preparing for the interview

Step 4 – develop the messages

Being a message conveyor means:

- Knowing your messages;
- Starting from wherever you want;
- Conveying your messages in a consistent manner;
- Doing everything possible to include them in the interview;
- Going beyond the answers to the questions; answer them, yet keep in mind to go back to your messages.

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 1: clear structuring of the message

A good message should answer the following questions:

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

How?

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 1: clear structuring of the message

A radio-TV message should not exceed 5-20 seconds (the average length of a clip is 30 seconds). The equivalent in the written media is a message of three lines at most.

Messages should be:

- easy to remember (plain words);
- positive (highlight the affirmative).

**Review and simplify your messages to keep them
concise, intelligible and relevant to your target
audience!**

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 2 – constructing a theme meant to unify the messages.

The theme is a subject or an “image word” that frames the messages in a memorable manner. Your messages will become a harmonious and unitary whole by underlining a theme throughout the interview. The theme (subject) should be predominant in the interview. Examples of such themes:

- "action to the benefit of the community",
- "undertaking responsibility";
- "think globally; act locally" etc.

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 3 – formulating a statement of position

- Draw up a statement of position setting the framework or the guidelines for the interview. During the interview, try to introduce the statement of position within the first 30 seconds. It usually defines the issue at stake or the essence of your stance.
- Start the interview from where you feel more comfortable, not from where the first question is trying to lead you.

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 3 – formulating a statement of position

Examples of support phrases and sentences:

- accepted by the target audience as reasonable, such as: "Sacrificing all birds within the outbreak practically eliminates any further infection risk. The faster this is done, the more protected community members and neighboring household will be. This is the explanation for the measures...."
- lay the necessary groundwork for pursuing your own message. Example: "we are examining all possible options at this point in time. Although the law gives us the right, we do not confiscate properties for payment default, but because..."

Preparing for the interview – preparing the messages

Step 4 – shaping the messages in order to render them more attractive and enhance their impact

The same message may yield a different impact depending on the actual way in which it is formulated. Search for examples, comparisons and valuable quotations in order to make the interview more interesting, alive, and to make sure that your messages will survive the (post)editing process. Beware! Figures of speech should not overburden the message, but just confer it strength and dynamism!

The unfolding of the interview

Placing messages in short segments or quotations

Unless the interview is a live show, in most cases your message will be abridged to a 5-10 sec. segment during a radio/TV newsflash, or to a 1-3 line quote in the written media. It goes without saying that you cannot force a reporter to quote you in a positive or negative manner. All you can do is ask him/her to use a quote or a short segment reinforcing your message. Hence, the key to conveying your messages via news articles is to prepare a couple of irresistible quotes and try to use them during the interview.

The unfolding of the interview

What are the features of an irresistible quote?

- It is brief: "The issue is not whether we have to act, but how fast we can do it!"
- It is self-sufficient (independent from the rest of the text): "To conclude, concerning the risk of a pandemic: tomorrow may depend on the way we act today!"
- It employs day-to-day language, not the jargon: "Let me tell you where we stand: we cannot run the risk of spreading the virus".
- It employs a "colorful" or metaphoric language: "he who sows the wind reaps the tempest".
- It is passionate or energetic: "We shall be covered in shame unless we show some compassion towards these people", or "This is a wake-up call for the entire community before other people are hit".

The unfolding of the interview

Using bridges

If you feel that the reporter is drifting away from the issue at stake, remedy the situation by using the so-called “bridges”. These are actually connecting phrases aimed at bringing the discussion back in your area of interest / your message.

Examples of bridges:

"Let's look at it from a broader perspective..."

"There is another, more important concern, and that is...."

"Let us not overlook the fundamental issue here..."

"There's another interesting issue..."

"You are thinking of an issue of the same importance? And that is..."

"This is not the actual issue. The real issue at stake here is..."

The unfolding of the interview

Avoiding any quotes out of the context

- Be 100% coherent.
- Avoid any improvised comments.
- Prepare self-sufficient quotes, independent from the subject (question), so that the audience does not have to base its understanding on the question. For instance, if you say "This is a matter of fair play...", the audience will not know what you are referring to and the quote will become unusable.
- Repeat the quotes and the key-messages. Each time you repeat them, there is a higher chance of seeing them introduced in the article. However, do not give the impression of repeating them ostentatiously.
- Try not to let yourselves lured into the trap, by repeating "bait words" launched by the reporter in the question (words with a negative emotional charge), such as: "greed", "guilt", "crime", etc.

The unfolding of the interview

Using bridges with your messages:

- use all available means to your own benefit. Your ultimate purpose is to convey messages, not to answer questions;
- imagine the bridge as a smooth rotation mechanism, not as a sudden turn for the intended direction;
- keep an honest tone;
- always answer at least one of the issues raised in the reporter's question;
- do not ignore critical comments in an obvious manner, but on the other hand avoid repeating bait words;
- answer briefly and launch the bridge to your message.

Direct communication with the population

Benefits for you:

- you will prove that both you and the authorities have given a prompt response to crisis situations;
- you will show solidarity with affected community members, proving that you care;
- you will be able to contradict any erroneous message about what happened on site – “I could personally see that...”;
- you can invite several reporters to gather documentation on the field on how the authorities are acting (after making sure that everything is OK on site), thus showing transparency and openness to the information needs of the press and of the population. Moreover, an on-site interview with you would prove to the entire community that you are deeply committed to public health issues.

Direct communication with the population

Benefits to the population:

- affected persons will feel that somebody cares;
- the community will be reassured, seeing that the authorities are familiar with the situation up to the highest hierarchical level and that all necessary measures are taken to contain the spread of the infection;
- your personal example and messages will weigh heavier in the people's eyes than those conveyed by other persons.

Direct communication with the population

During a visit:

- First and foremost, earn the people's trust. Be polite. Use phrases such as “I know how you feel” or “I understand”. Put yourself on the same level as the respective family.
- Tell people about the efforts to contain the infection. Try to provide plain and simple explanations. Do not give too many technical information, but clearly explain what measures can be taken against bird flu and why everybody should take part in this joint effort.

Direct communication with the population

During a visit:

- Hand out fliers (if available) so that family members might read them afterwards; even for those who cannot read, such materials will remind them of your visit, while pupils or other persons in the family can read the brochures to them.
- Ask for participation and support. Tell them over and over again that it is in their power to help protect the entire community. Thank them for their time and cooperation.

Direct communication with the population

Always:

- Be calm – people might get scared and confused. Be patient.
- Listen carefully – listen more than you talk and answer their concerns empathetically.
- Motivate people – tell your interlocutors that intervention is essential in order to contain the bird flu expansion.
- Repeat the messages – through their intervention, people can protect themselves, their families and neighbors.
- Be honest – If you do not know the answer to a certain question, tell them you will contact them for an accurate answer.

Direct communication with the population

Never:

- Throw a temper and look impatient.
- Use phrases such as “you are wrong”, “what proof of ignorance”.
- Blame the family.
- Shake your head in a disapproving manner when voicing an opinion.
- Answer a question when you don’t really know the answer.
- Threaten the family.
- Behave arrogantly and insult the family.
- Take notes – may trigger a sense of anxiety.

Direct communication with the population

Statements you can use when interacting with families on bird flu:

- As it happened in other countries, bird flu is now a problem in our country, as well.**
- Any person coming in contact with sick or dead birds is exposed to the risk of getting bird flu. One can never know for sure when a bird has the flue or anything else, so it's better to take precautionary measures. Some birds, such as ducks, may very well not exhibit any symptoms whatsoever.**

Direct communication with the population

Statements you can use when interacting with families on bird flu:

- From what we know so far, it seems that bird flu is not transmitted among humans.
- The infected birds' excrements, blood, saliva and nasal secretions may carry the virus, which can survive for several hours on various surfaces (and several days out in the open). The virus is destroyed only by boiling and using soap or detergent.
- Each individual should participate in everyone's protection against the spread of the disease.

CASE STUDIES

CASE I – Tuzla Village, Constanța County.

Tuzla Village has 6,131 inhabitants and is located at the East of Constanța County, on the shore of the Black Sea. The first cases of fowl infected with avian influenza were reported on February 15th, 2006 in a single household; two days later it had spread to two additional households in the vicinity of the first.

Crisis management

The local public administration authorities followed with concern the outbreak of avian influenza in fowl in several localities of Tulcea County, and when such cases were reported in the locality of Topraisar, local authorities started preparing the population for the imminent spread of the disease to Tuzla village.

The first measure taken by the local public administration authorities was to set up the local anti-epizootic committee, by way of order no. 194/October 11, 2005.

Order no. 201, issued by the mayor on October 17th, 2005 established measures to prevent the occurrence of avian influenza in fowl in Tulcea village.

Until February 14th, 2006, these measures were brought to the attention of the population by all available means: Culture Club gatherings, sticking up prevention measure posters, discussing with inhabitants coming to the Town Hall, discussing with citizens at the two local churches after Sunday mass etc.

After the three cases were reported on February 15th, 2006, test samples were collected from the affected households. On February 19th, 2006, the test results received from the Bucharest Diagnostic and Animal Health Institute confirmed the presence of the H5N1 virus in the three local households. A week later new cases were identified in a household located at the center of the locality, which triggered the local authorities' decision to subject to euthanasia a number of over 34,000 birds in over 1,300 households. The euthanasia operation was concluded on February 20th, 2006.

Euthanasia operations were carried out in 6 sectors of the locality, by 120 persons distributed at the incineration point and at the two pest control points (the locality entrance and exit points).

The local authorities were supported by the Constanța Sanitary and Veterinary Division, the National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority and the Constanța County Prefect's Office. The Military Police Force and the Constanța County Police Department kept order as part of sector commissions and of the pest control teams etc.

As quarantine of the first degree was declared, people were forbidden to leave the locality; necessary food supplies were provided by territorial units and from the aid granted by the Government of Romania through the Constanța County Prefect's Office (14,000 l oil, 14,000 kg sugar, pork and beef preserves, liver pâté preserves were distributed to inhabitants).

A measure with positive impact on the population was that fowl subjected to euthanasia were paid for within 3 days, at a convenient price.

Practical conclusions drawn by local authorities pursuant to this crisis

1. Local counsellors, civil servants and local administration employees were involved in carrying out the operations, setting an example and acquiring experience useful for their activity within the local public administration.
2. The locality was affected by the avian influenza crisis after having been severely flooded in October 2005, when 340 households were affected, out of which 18 houses were demolished; however, we believe this has made us stronger and more experienced and has taught us to cooperate with all the institutions legally responsible for the management of such crises.
3. We believe that the most important thing is to be able to get close to people, to talk to them, make them understand moments of crisis and cause them to intervene promptly and meet our requests. It is our obligation to support them and help them, within the limits of the law, in difficult times such as these.

CASE II – Borcea Village, Călărași County

Borcea village has 9,311 inhabitants and is located on the Danube River. The first avian influenza case was reported on February 28th, 2006 by the village epizootologist, who was informed by his staff that a number of birds brought by a man from the farm he worked for as a security guard had died in his courtyard.

Crisis management

The first measure taken after having been informed about the situation was to urgently convene the local anti-epizootic committee, which decided to immediately isolate the respective household, confining all persons and animals to the household area.

Fast tests were immediately performed and samples were collected and sent to specialized laboratories in Călărași and Bucharest for virus identification.

On March 6th, 2006, pursuant to a test result analysis, the disease was announced. As the fast tests turned out positive, bird euthanasia operations were initiated and pest control measures were taken in the respective household.

All family members were vaccinated and treated with TAMIFLU.

The quarantine was declared on March 7th, 2006 and it consisted of isolation of the village by setting up filters at the entrance and exit from the locality and at hotbed limits.

Vehicles, motor vehicles and persons were confined to the village.

Pursuant to heated discussions within the local and county anti-epizootic departments, it was decided that birds be sacrificed within a very well delimited perimeter, without affecting the over 100,000 birds existing in the village.

Around 2,300 birds were subjected to euthanasia. Concurrently with fowl euthanasia, all courtyards within the delimited perimeter were disinfected three times around.

After performing the final disinfection and testing the efficiency of the procedure, sentinel chickens were placed primarily in the household where the hotbed was identified, in neighbouring courtyards and at the limits of the delimited area.

Two weeks after avian influenza was declared, as a result of the pressure exercises by inhabitants and by local companies where around 1,000 persons were employed, circulation was again permitted, conditional on special disinfection measures being taken at the filters. Children were also allowed access to schools and kindergartens under the same terms.

Representatives of the county Health and Veterinary Directorate, of the Public Health Directorate, of the Military Police Force, the Police and, of course, of the local administration were involved in this action.

The representatives of the Health and Veterinary Directorate, The Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Town Hall drafted the documentation for the persons whose fowl were subjected to euthanasia; these persons were indemnified with particular promptness (2 weeks) and at satisfactory level, which was a positive element.

Practical conclusions drawn by local authorities pursuant to this crisis

1. The operation was given a lot of media coverage, as it implied the euthanasia of over 100,000 birds of over 3,000 households.
2. Efficiency in hotbed identification is essential in cutting costs and limiting the spread of the disease.
3. Population preparation is essential for a correct crisis management.
4. We believe that mass euthanasia of all the fowl in one area and total isolation of a locality is excessive because:
 - they would generate a natural tendency to hide birds;
 - locality isolation measures will never be practically efficient and will only irritate the population;
 - collateral costs are caused by thousands of people skipping work.
5. If the fast tests performed in the vicinity of the hotbed are negative, bird euthanasia shall be limited to immediately neighbouring households, for the above-mentioned reasons.

CASE III – Stelnica village, Ialomița County

Stelnica village has 1,716 inhabitants and is located at the East of Ialomița County. On December 18th, 2005 an inhabitant of Stelnica village informed the local veterinarian that his birds were dying.

Crisis management

The veterinarian collected samples from the inhabitant's household and sent them to the Ialomița National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority for examination and testing for H5N1 (avian influenza). Test results were positive. Considering the situation, on December 19th, 2005 representatives of the Ialomița National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority went to the Stelnica Town Hall to inform the local

anti-epizootic committee of the positive test results, for the latter to become active and take the measures established by way of Order no. 26/2005 in case avian influenza is suspected.

The local anti-epizootic commiyyrr was activated by way of Order no. 1/2005 of the President of the local anti-epizootic department and it reunited in a working session to decide on the enforcement of the “Program of Measures”:

- placing pest control teams at the entrance and exit points, in two shifts of four people for each disinfection filter;
- providing protection and disinfection materials;
- ensuring transportation and the necessary means to set up the incineration pit, etc;
- installing 4 disinfection filters at entry and exit points and in the hotbed area;
- foot disinfecting filters were installed in households where the fast tests results had been positive;
- the designated veterinarian who was given concession by the authorities went on location to perform a clinical examination of all the households in Stelnica village.

In the same period, representatives of the Ialomița National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority went to the affected household to isolate the hotbed by performing euthanasia on the existing fowl and disinfecting the area; fast tests were then performed in households in the hotbed area. The same measures were taken in 3 households where tests results were positive.

After sample collection and performance of fast tests in the hotbed area, the samples were sent to Bucharest to confirm the presence of the avian influenza virus.

After the presence of the virus was confirmed, the local anti-epizootic department initiated enforcement of the following measures:

- purchasing disinfection filter materials (moquette, disinfecting solution, sprayers, protection materials, fuel, dustbins, polyethylene bags etc.)
- delimitation of the area where euthanasia operations are to be performed;
- convening the voluntary disinfection teams to gather the fowl in the affected households to the designated perimeter and provide the materials necessary to transport the fowl and set up the incineration pit, to provide intervention equipment, centralize the data and supervise the staff, collect blood and bird carcasses and to ensure the fuel necessary to transport the fowl;
- performing euthanasia on birds in 76 households, amounting to 2,860 (hens, ducks, geese, turkeys);
- total disinfection of affected households.

All these measures were taken in cooperation with the members of the county anti-epizootic department (the Ialomița National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority, the Ialomița Public Health Directoarate, the Military Police Force, the Fire Department, the Police, the Security and Protection Service, the Prefect’s Office, the Ialomița Agriculture and Rural Development Directorate).

In order to be established in the locality, quarantine was initially established only in the bird euthanasia area, for a period of 21 days. The quarantine included the following measures:

- no-one entered or exited the perimeter;
- vehicle circulation and bird and animal transportation were forbidden.

Pursuant to warnings received by the Ialomița county anti-epizootic department concerning avian influenza outbursts in the counties of Tulcea, Brăila and Ialomița, the local anti-epizootic committee, together with the designated veterinarian who was given concession by the authorities, started a campaign to inform the population by way of public announcements. People were asked to sign special tables to acknowledge receipt of the information, which lead to a positive response from the population when avian influenza outbursts were suspected, even though, in few cases, some bird owners opposed euthanasia operations.

Immediately after completion of the euthanasia operations in the hotbed area, the drafting of the financial indemnification documentation was initiated and was completed in 24 hours. The indemnification amount was of lei 636,900,000.

Practical conclusions drawn by local authorities pursuant to this crisis

1. Mayors must be familiar with the provisions of the Mayor's Emergency Manual.
2. Informative leaflets are very useful to increase awareness levels among citizens.

CASE IV – Cornu village, Prahova county

Cornu village has 4,485 inhabitants. On May 22nd, 2006 an inhabitant of Cornu village announced the death of 8 hens in his courtyard.

Crisis management

The veterinarian and his assistant went on location. They collected the dead fowl in plastic bags, as per the existing hygiene and protection norms. The bird carcasses were sent to the Prahova National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority for tests. As an outbreak of avian influenza was suspected, the remaining 25 birds were killed and sent to the Prahova National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority and to Protan. The area was disinfected over a surface of 1,300 sqm, representing the courtyard and the annexes, with 1% Virkon solution. On May 23rd, 2006, a team from the Prahova Public Health Department went on the premises to identify the contacts, assess their clinical state, administer Tamiflu treatment, disinfect the household and distribute dish disinfecting substances.

The Cornu Town Hall took the following measures:

- a disinfection filter was set up in the area and the movement of animals, animal products, fodder, waste, linen, vehicles and equipment was forbidden;
- the population was warned of the danger of avian influenza contamination through announcements made on the local cable television channel and posted in public places;
- the population was informed with regard to the measures taken to prevent avian influenza infection
- entering and exiting the village carrying live fowl was forbidden;
- the village received disinfection and protection substances;

- schools, kindergartens and public institutions were endowed with disinfection units and special hygiene measures were implemented;
- village companies were warned with regard to their obligation to set up disinfecting units and acquire disinfecting substances.

These measures were preceded by Order no. 359/24.06.2006 of the Prahova County Prefect on the enforcement of legal measures due to the remaining avian influenza suspicion. The local anti-epizootic department was also convened and it drafted a village-level action plan.

First degree quarantine was established on June 26th, 2006 by way of Order no. 403/26.06.2006 of the Prahova County Prefect. The following measures were taken in cooperation with the representatives of the Prahova National Health, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority: the hotbed was delimited, the 67 birds existing in the citizens' households were killed, the hotbed and immediately neighbouring courtyards were disinfected with 0.5% Aldekol solution and the bird carcasses were incinerated and buried.

A second disinfection was performed in the area on may 28th, 2006.

The disinfection filters was maintained and in periods of heavy rain the concentration of disinfection solutions was increased in order to ensure their effectiveness.

The third and final disinfection was performed on June 4th, 2006 and it was followed by sanitation tests performed to check the efficiency of the disinfection process.

On June 7th, 2006 the Prahova County Prefect Office issued order no. 468/07.06.2006 concerning the necessary measures to liquidate the hotbed and lift quarantine.

On June 9th, 2006 the owners of the fowl subjected to euthanasia received the indemnification due as per GD 1415/2004.

On June 10th, 2006 sentinel birds were introduced in the hotbed and in a neighboring household for daily examination; they were serologically tested on June 26th, 2006 and test results were negative, therefore the quarantine was lifted.

Practical conclusions drawn by local authorities pursuant to this crisis

1. Local authorities must be allocated funds for:
 - collection and transportation of carcasses and samples;
 - materials and substances used to fight against diseases;
2. Analysis of the status of the designated veterinarian who was given concession by the authorities.
3. Conducting a wider and more timely population awareness campaign in case such epizootic disease occurs again.

Case Study Presentation

Four Case Studies

- Tuzla commune, Constanța county
- Borcea commune, Călărași county
- Stelnica commune, Ialomița county
- Cornu commune, Prahova county

Case Details

- Three cases have been reported by villagers, the other one being discovered by the epizooty physician.
- Almost 6,000 birds have been killed.
- Quarantine information (in three of the cases, quarantine was extended over the entire commune)
- In all cases, the indemnification of locals was satisfactory

Lessons Learned by Mayors

- Media interest can be overwhelming.
- Informing the local authorities and villagers is of the essence.
- The Government will sacrifice all birds that need to be sacrificed in order to halt the spread of the virus.
- Local authorities need funds for properly coping with epizooties.

Advice to Mayors

- Make sure bird owners are abreast with the new laws.
- Co-operate with the official veterinarian and with other government officials.
- Be prepared for a media attack.
- It is important to properly manage bird cases in order to avoid any human cases.

Group exercises

1. You are the mayor of a small commune. After having conducted random tests, the Ministry of Agriculture has identified bird flu cases in your community. You were contacted by the local Health and Veterinarian Agency and notified on the situation. At the same time, you were told that the Agency was going to come to your commune as soon as possible, in order to take control over the situation. Considering what you have learned in the training session, answer the following questions:
 - Let us assume that you have had the opportunity to discuss with the inhabitants about the bird flue, before the outbreak of the epidemic. What have you done to help the people prepare?
 - What would be the steps you would have to do next in order to manage this crisis?
 - Let us assume that the local veterinarian will ask for part of the commune to go into quarantine. As a mayor, what can you do in order for this process to run smoothly, both for the people who have been affected and for the authorities?

Group exercises

2. You are the mayor of a large commune. While discussing with the inhabitants of your commune, one of them said that he had seen one of his fellow village inhabitants throwing dead birds in an unauthorized area. You took the necessary action to investigate the incident and you sent a report to the veterinarian. Despite the efforts you made to manage the situation, the TV stations have found out about the epidemic and they have come to your village to film. The epidemic is serious enough for the veterinarian to ask the local council to impose first degree quarantine in a very populous area of the village. The commune inhabitants who have been affected refuse to cooperate with the authorities to kill the birds and to observe the quarantine, while the media is eager to get answers from you about the action being taken. Considering what you have learned during the training session, answer the following questions:

- What do you have to do when the veterinarian tells you that you need to impose the quarantine?
- What methods will you use when you speak to the bird owners in order to compel them to kill their birds as instructed by the veterinarians?
- Will you use the same methods when you speak to the people who violate the quarantine?
- What are you going to do to prepare for the TV interviews?

LEGAL PROVISIONS ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCES OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

1. Certificate of ownership over and health of the animals

„For the animals in the population households, the local village, town and municipal councils shall issue „certificates of ownership over and health of the animals”, as typical formal documents, that are valid for all the species, as per annex 1.

The shall be issued on an individual basis for large animals (cattle, horses) irrespective of their age, and on an individual or collective basis for porcine belonging to the same owner.

Young cattle and horses that are still fed on milk shall be registered in the ownership documents of their mothers, when they move together to another locality.” (art.33 in the Standard on veterinarian health and on food safety concerning the general measures aiming at preventing and fighting infectious-contagious and parasitic diseases in animals, as approved by Order of the President of the National Authority for Veterinarian Health and for Food Safety, 26/2005, hereinafter called the Veterinary Norm)

„These certificates of ownership over and health of the animals shall be issued by an employee of the Town Hall who has been appointed by means of a decision of that particular local council, and who has received trainings to how that certificate is to be filled out and who will be responsible for the accuracy of the data to be written and for managing the certificate registers he/she has received.” (art.36 in the Veterinary Norm)

„The validity term of the animal ownership and health certificates, as ownership documents is of one year for cattle and horses and of 15 days for the pigs, after which, if need be, they must be changed. When ownership is transferred to somebody else, they are proof of ownership and they must accompany the animal transport only up to the domicile of the new owner or up to the area where animals will be slaughtered for public consumption, after which it is considered that they have been cancelled. A model certificate of ownership is presented in annex 1.” (art.37 in the Veterinary Norm)

„The animal health and ownership certificates, aside from the serial number that they receive by printing, they shall be numbered when issued by all the village, town and municipal local councils, starting each year at nr. 1 and going all the way until the end of the year. Any

potential documents, based on which the certificates have been issued, shall be given an issue number and they shall be kept together with the duplicate. The old certificates which have been changed or those which served for the registration of the ownership, shall be cancelled by writing with ink or by stamping them with an inscription that reads CANCELED.” (art.38 in the Veterinary Norm)

„Animal health and ownership certificates shall only be issued for those animals which have been recorded in the village agricultural register and if that particular locality is by no means subject to any veterinary health restrictions.

Where animals coming from one’s own breeding are concerned, the field in the certificate that concerns the origin shall read “owner’s breeding” . When ownership is registered, the same field shall also read the number, place and date when the old certificate was issued, the place and date when the new owner was registered. The certificates shall also include, under this field both the locality and the specific animal destination (slaughter house, donation, sale in the fair, etc.). If wrong data has been registered in the certificates, the employee who is in charge of issuing these documents shall make the necessary corrections, and shall authenticate the document by signing it and putting on it the stamp of that particular local council.” (art.39 in the Veterinary Norm)

„Except for the village where the owner lives, the villages which host animal fairs can – during the days when these fairs are held – register ownership, if any animals are bought or sold, on the certificates of animal ownership and health issued by other local councils.

The change of animal ownership shall be recorded in a register.” (art.40 in the Veterinary Norm)

„If certificates are lost, new animal ownership and health certificates can be issued to replace them, only after the local council managing the area where the owner lives or where the ownership transfer has taken place has been informed about it.” (art. 41 in the Health Norm)

„Animals registered in an ownership document can only be taken or transported to the locality and the destination provided for in that document.

The change in destinations for animals that are walked or transported via animal-draft vehicles or car vehicles – unless there are any veterinarian health restrictions – can be performed by the employee who is charge of issuing ownership certificates, at the level of the local council in the source locality or in one of the localities that are on the way to the destination.

When there are veterinary health restrictions on animal movement, the destination can be changed only by the official veterinarian who is in charge of the locality where the animals have arrived, after he/she has obtained the approval of the Veterinary Health and Food Safety Directorate. The same applies for the animals which have been found on a road that does not lead to the established destination, after a thorough investigation has been performed, irrespective of the animal health status that is written in the documents.

For those animals which are transported by railways, by ships or by planes, the destination can be changed only following approval to do so by the Directorate for Veterinarian Health and Food Safety.

The change of destination in the animal ownership and health certificates shall be readable, and it shall be certified once it has been signed and stamped.” (art.42 in the Veterinary Norm)

2. The local anti-epizootic committee

2.1. Establishment

„To support the actions aimed at combating communicable diseases in animals, according to decisions of the local or county councils, or of the Municipality of Bucharest, anti-epizootic committees shall be established and they shall include the rulers of the localities in that area as well as other people who are in charge of implementing the control measures which have been determined by the Authority on combating diseases.” (art. 26, paragraph (4) in the Government Ordinance 42/2004 on organizing the health activity)

„The measures aimed at preventing and combating communicable diseases in animals shall be implemented by the village, town, municipal and county committee whose structure shall be determined by means of decisions of the executive boards of the respective popular councils.

In case of epizooties that pose a particular threat to the national economy, a Government decision shall be issued to create the Central Anti-epizootic Committee.” (art. 1, paragraph (2) in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

2.2. Structure

„Municipal, city and village anti-epizootic committees shall be established by means of local council decisions and they shall be run by the mayor. The local anti-epizootic committee shall include the veterinarian of the area veterinarian health constituency, the people who manage all the

areas that are related to or that might support the action aimed at preventing and combating communicable diseases in animals, the technical secretary being the freelance veterinarian who has been delegated to act as such.

The municipal, city and village committees have the same tasks and responsibilities on that area as do the county committees that they report to.” (art. 3 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Failure to respect the decisions issued by the central antiepidemiological committee, by the presidents and members of the county or local antiepidemiological committees, or failure to respect the decisions issued by the county epidemiological committee, by the presidents and the members of the local antiepidemiological committee shall be deemed to be a crime and shall be punished by jail from six months to a year.” (art. 9, paragraph (3) in the Law nr. 221/2006 for approving the Government Emergency Ordinance nr. 11/2006 on the measures that are implemented for monitoring, combating and eradicating avian influenza on the Romanian territory)

2.3. Attributions

„The county anti-epidemiological committee shall be established by means of a prefect’s decision. This committee shall include: the director general of the General Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development, the director of the Directorate for Veterinarian Health and for Food Safety (the technical secretary of the committee), the director of the County Public Health Directorate, the commander of the county police, the managers of the institutions and entities whose activities are related to the way production, transportation, processing and use of the animals and animal and vegetal products are organized, the managers of the county forestry and hunting authorities, as well as other managers of various other institutions, entities or organizations that are related to preventing and combating diseases in animals, according to the particulars of that county.

The county anti-epidemiological committee has the following attributions:

- a) to regularly analyse the veterinarian health status of the county and to establish measures to improve it;
- b) in case of epidemiological diseases occurring at county level, the committee has the following tasks:
- c) to establish the general measure framework in order to prevent and combat epidemics, as per the legal provisions or recommendations coming from the central anti-epidemiological committee and to take action for them to be disseminated;
- d) to provide the technical and material basis, as well as the necessary organization measures needed to implement the action plan;

e) to monitor whether the prevention and combating measures are implemented, setting responsibilities for each member of the committee, for each activity segment or territorial area;

f) to operatively analyze the development of the epizooty and the effectiveness of the action which has been taken, taking all necessary additional measures.” (art. 2 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„The anti-epizootic committees are obliged to regularly analyze the development of the epizooty, to take action to do away with the difficulties and deficiencies arising, to establish and to implement additional measures needed to combat it.” (art. 79 in the Veterinary Norm)

2.4. Reactivation

„Any person who by his\her activity comes in contact with the animals has the obligation to immediately inform the competent veterinarian health authority and the local council about the cases appearing in animals.” (art. 8 in the Veterinary Norm)

„In case there are sudden cases of diseases, emergency slaughters or death cases in animals, the herd shall be kept in a sealed off area and the local council of the locality shall be informed about it, and they shall in their turn immediately notify the official veterinarian of the area veterinarian constituency where these events occurred, in order for the necessary action to be taken. If an epizootic diseases should occur in the herd, the animal holders and guardians have the obligation to make sure that the recommendations given by the authority for veterinarian health and for food safety at county level and at the level of the municipality of Bucharest.” (art. 27 in the Veterinary Norm)

3. Measures to be taken in case there are illnesses appearing in animals

3.1. Obligations of the local authorities when new cases of diseases are announced

„Once they have found out about any disease cases, the local councils have the obligation to notify the official veterinarian right away, and until he/she arrives to take the following action:

a) to control if the measures designed to make sure that ill or suspect animals are sealed off and that restrictions are imposed on the movement of animals, meat and other products derived from these animals, as well as on fodder and other materials or objects that might be contaminated;

b) to research whether the disease has spread, as well as to catalogue the animals in those courtyards where there are ill animals or animals that are believed to be ill;

c) to put an end to the animal ownership and health certificates being issued and to withdraw such documents which have been previously issued;

d) to stop and seal off in a remote area of the locality the animal herds posing by and for which cases or suspicions of diseases have been found, until the official veterinarian appears.” (art.48 in the Veterinary Norm)

3.2. Obligations of the official veterinarian

„The official veterinarian of the area veterinarian health constituency following notification has the obligation to go right away to the locality or to the animal farm and to do the following:

a) to control the action taken by the animal holder or the local council, and to add to it if necessary;

b) to examine ill animals, which are suspect of being ill or contaminated, as well as the meat and the products coming from animals that have been slaughtered as an emergency operation, and to perform the autopsy on the dead animals;

c) to examine all the animals in the species in that locality and even in the neighbouring localities, which are in his/her area of activity, if the disease has spread to several yards;

d) to perform the epizootologic investigation according to the existing regulations in force to determine the date when the disease appeared, as well as its origin, if ill animals or animals which are believed to be ill or contaminated, or if contaminated animal or vegetal products have been taken out of the locality. In these cases, he/she shall notify; the Directorate for veterinarian health and food safety that they report to;

e) to conduct any other type of investigations to determine the disease diagnosis, collecting samples for the laboratory from the bodies which have undergone autopsy or from the meat coming from emergency slaughter procedures;

f) in the animal farms that have their own veterinarians, they have the obligation to make available for the official veterinary of the area veterinary constituency all the data and information with a view to setting the diagnosis.” (art. 49 in the Veterinary Norm)

„If following the investigations which have been conducted, the official veterinarian of the area health constituency excludes the possibility of a contagious disease, he /she shall ask for restrictions to be lifted.” (art. 50 in the Veterinary Norm)

„If the investigations which have been conducted cannot exclude the communicable disease suspicion, those animals which are believed to be ill shall be kept in a sealed off area and they shall be monitored, while samples shall be collected for the laboratory diagnosis.

In these cases, the official veterinarian has the obligation to notify by phone the County Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate, or that at the level of the Bucharest municipality.

To set the diagnosis, if there are no recent carcasses or animals which have been slaughtered as an emergency measure, the official veterinarian may ask – following approval by the Veterinary and Food Safety Authority– that an animal which is believed to ill or which is ill be slaughtered in order to set the diagnosis.

Collection, packaging and shipment of the samples to be used for laboratory research shall be in keeping with the existing regulations in force.” (art. 51 in the Veterinary Norm)

„In all cases when a communicable disease is believed to have occurred, all the combating measures concerning that particular disease shall be taken, but the disease shall not be made official.” (art. 52 in the Veterinary Norm)

„At the same time as the official announcement about the disease, the official veterinarian shall notify the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorates in the neighbouring 20 kilometres. For those diseases which spread rapidly (foot and mouth disease, African porcine pest, porcine bladder disease, pseudoavian plague, etc.), as well as in those cases where a large number of animals and people have fallen ill, the notification shall be performed by phone both at the level of the county directorates for veterinarian health and food safety and at that of the area health constituencies in the neighbouring area.” (art. 56 in the Veterinary Norm)

„In all cases when diseases that can be transmitted to human are found, the human doctor of that health constituency shall be notified right away, although the official veterinarian may have no knowledge on the respective health constituency, even though the official veterinarian may not have any knowledge about cases of the disease having spread to humans.” (art. 57 in the Veterinary Norm)

3.3. Announcing the disease

„1. The official announcement about the diseases provided for in Annex nr. III shall be made by the veterinarian of the local health constituency, based on the assumed diagnoses which has been set following investigations and which has been confirmed by laboratory examinations.

2. The announcement would presuppose drafting a veterinarian health document with the Town Hall of the locality where the disease has been identified, a document that will be edited as per the model in Annex nr. IV to the current veterinarian health norm, that will include the following:

- a) the name of the disease;
- b) the animal species which have been affected;
- c) the date when the disease appeared;
- d) the locality and the county;
- e) the number of households and animal farms which have been contaminated and the number of animals in them;
- f) the number of ill animals which have been slaughtered because needed or of dead animals;
- g) the origin of the disease, the sources and the contamination ways;
- h) the veterinarian health measures and restrictions established at hotbed and locality level.

3. The veterinary health document whereby the aforesaid diseases are registered in the Town Hall records, with the mayor signing once he/she has taken note of it.

4. Based on the veterinary health document whereby the diseases mentioned in annex three are announced, the local public administration shall issue a decision to set veterinary restrictions in the territory, via announcement and publications that serve to inform the population.” (Order by the Minister of Agriculture and Food nr. 156/1999 for approving the Veterinary Norm concerning the announcement and notification of a communicable disease in animals)

3.4. Setting the measures for combating the disease

„The village, town or municipal county council, based on the veterinarian health document whereby the disease is officially announced, shall take the necessary legal action depending on the existing local conditions, to combat the disease.

The decision of the local council shall be implemented by the anti-epizootic committees.

Depending on the way the disease develops, the provisions of the decision of the local council shall be added to, changed or repealed by these entities, following a written proposal by an official veterinarian or of a senior official veterinarian.” (art. 58 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Veterinary measures taken to combat the disease and which are provided for in the official announcement of the disease, in the decision of the local council as well as in those that have been established later, as per the provisions of the previous article, are mandatory and need to be observed as such by all legal bodies and individuals.” (art. 59 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

3.5. Quarantine

„The meaning of quarantine is a complex of restrictive measures imposed on the movement of animals, humans, products of animal and vegetal origin, fodder, utensils, transport means, dejections, etc., with a view to halting the spread of animal contagious diseases.

Depending on whether the disease has spread or not, on the degree of contagiousness, on the transmission ways and on the number of animals at risk, quarantine is applicable to a limited number of households, animal farms, localities, pastures, villages, groups of villages or wider territories, and in case of certain diseases, only on a limited number of or on certain categories of animals and products derived from these animals.” (art. 69 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Depending on how serious the development of the disease is, on how easily it spreads and on the particulars of the transmission ways, quarantine measures are rated in terms of their severity (Ist , IInd and IIIrd degree quarantine).” (art. 70 in the Veterinary Norm)

„First degree is applicable to all highly contagious diseases, such as foot and mouth and other exotic diseases. In such circumstances, the measures that are taken are of the most severe, a ban being imposed on animal movement (including for species which are not receptive to that particular disease), as well as on the movement of people, animal and vegetal origin products, vehicles, tools and on that of any object that might have been or be contaminated.

Animals shall be kept in sealed off shelters, while contaminated households shall be placed under surveillance. Animal dejections, their litter and fodder waste which is contaminated shall be destroyed on a daily basis.

It is forbidden that people come in and out of the territories placed under quarantine, and it is only for exceptional force majeure cases and under special disinfection and veterinarian health surveillance conditions that permission is granted to do so.

Shipment shall be used as a method for supplying all territories placed under quarantine. In the contaminated locality, one can exceptionally use car vehicles, as per the special technical instructions in place. Until the situation becomes stable, it is strictly forbidden to organize any kind of social activities and events that might help spread the disease.” (art. 71 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Second degree quarantine is applicable only for those diseases which have an average level of contagiousness, such as classical porcine plague. For such cases, movement restrictions are applicable for all animals, products and for the people coming from the contaminated households alone. As to the rest of the contaminated locality, only the affected species shall be sealed off in shelters. It is strictly forbidden to take in or out any kind of receptive animals as well as to take out any kind of products derived from the affected species.

People who are in the hotbeds may come out under special circumstances on certain disinfection conditions, following approval by and under the surveillance of the local Veterinary and Food Safety Authority.” (art. 72 in the Veterinary Norm)

„Third degree quarantine is applicable for all diseases that are mainly transmitted via direct contact amongst the receptive (ex. rabies, tuberculosis, diseases which are transmitted by reproduction etc.). Where these diseases are concerned, restrictions shall be imposed on the movement and reproduction of animals that are ill or are believed to be, certain exemptions being made to ensure product circulation.” (art. 73 in the Veterinary Norm)

„First and second degree quarantine shall be established following a decision by the local council board, based on the veterinarian health document that officially states and announces the disease, and which is drafted by the official veterinarian of the veterinary health constituency of that area, as per the provisions in order nr. 156/1999.

When the territory that is going to be subject to quarantine measures is larger than a village, quarantine shall be established following a decision by the county local council, based on the proposal submitted by the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate.” (art. 74 in the Veterinary Norm)

„Third degree quarantine shall only be established only based on the official document officially stating and announcing the disease, drafted by the official veterinarian of the veterinary health constituency in the area.” (art. 75 in the Veterinary Norm)

„The implementation of the restrictive quarantine measures is the responsibility of the local councils by means of the anti-epizootic committees. Controlling whether these measures are observed is the responsibility of the sanitary and veterinarian personnel and of the police, who will draft papers to penalize any violation of the measures imposed.” (art. 76 in the Veterinary Norm)

3.6. The epizootic area

„An epizootic area is a territory around the localities that are under quarantine and that is directly threatened because of a largely contagious disease, territories that need a strict surveillance of the healthy animals, as well as some restrictions in terms of the circulation of animals, humans, animal and vegetal origin products.

An epizootic area is established by means of a county council decision or by one of the municipality of Bucharest, following a proposal to do so by the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate, depending on how serious the disease is, the epizootic area can be 10 to 30 km deep.” (art. 81 in the Veterinary Norm)

„It is mandatory to implement the animal circulation restrictions as well as those concerning the circulation of humans provided for in the decision for establishing the epizootic area. This is an obligation for all animal and product holders, be they natural persons or legal bodies, as well as for the local councils and for the police, while the animal health status as well as the technical prophylaxis measures are to be implemented by the veterinarian health staff.” (art. 82 in the Veterinary Norm)

3.7. Emergency disinfection, rat and insect killing

„The purpose of the emergency disinfection is to destroy any germs of the disease that might be found in shelters or where ill animals are, on animals, in their products or dejections, on tools or equipment used to process products, on reins or vehicles, on fodder or in the drinking water, on the clothes and footwear of the cleaning people and of other people who have come in contact with the ill animals or with contaminated products.” (art. 83 in the Veterinary Norm)

„Animal holders as well as those people who manage contaminated facilities that slaughter animals, process, store, transport and sell animal origin products have the obligation to conduct emergency disinfections, under the guidance and control of the veterinarian medical staff. In case of the facilities requiring a lot of work as well as in the case of largely contagious diseases that pose a threat to humans, disinfections shall be conducted using special disinfection equipment.” (art. 84 in the Veterinary Norm)

„When selecting the disinfection equipment, what is to be considered is the particulars of the etiological agent of the disease, its resistance in the exterior environment, and how sensitive it is when it comes to the action of various disinfecting substances.” (art. 85 in the Veterinary Norm)

„In order to prevent the pathogenic germs from spreading out of the epizootic hotbeds via the rodents and flies, emergency disinfection shall be preceded by rat killing in case rodents are found to exist and shall be complemented by insect killing procedures during the season when flies are numerous.” (art. 86 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Rat and insect killing shall be conducted by the animal holders and by the managers of the facilities, with the support of the specialized teams, as authorized by the County and Food Safety Authority, or by the relevant authority of Bucharest, or with its own teams and equipment, under guidance and surveillance by the veterinarian health staff.” (art. 87 in the Veterinary Norm)

3.8. Eradicating the disease and lifting quarantine measures

„The official eradication of the disease shall be done based on the provisions of the Order by the minister of agriculture and food nr. 156/1999, modified by order nr. 68/2003 for approving the Veterinary Health Norm on announcing and notifying any communicable diseases in animals by the official veterinarian of the area veterinarian constituency, when they find that:

- a) in the territorial area that is placed under quarantine there are no longer ill animals or animals placed under observation for that particular disease;
- b) the final disinfection has been performed, as well as rat and insect killing, when they were needed;
- c) the minimum amount of time since the last case of death, healing or slaughter caused by the disease has elapsed as per the special instructions on preventing and combating the disease.” (art. 88 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„ First and second degree quarantine measures shall be lifted based on the official veterinary health documents, whereby the disease has been eradicated, following a decision by the local council.

The restrictive measures in the epizootic area shall be lifted following a decision by the local and county council, following the official eradication of the disease in the locality or in the localities where the disease had spread and developed.

Third degree measures quarantine measures shall only be lifted based on the document whereby the disease has been officially eradicated.” (art. 89 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„1. All measures and restrictions are lifted when the declarable communicable diseases – as per annex three – have been eradicated and when it has been found that:

1.1. in the locality there are no longer any ill or suspect animals being monitored, for that particular declared disease;

1.2. the necessary amount of time as per the veterinary health norms typical for each disease since the last healing, emergency slaughter or death has elapsed;

1.3. the results of the laboratory examinations performed on the samples collected from the hotbeds, from the protection or surveillance area have come out negative;

1.4. all the necessary prophylactic and prevention measures have been fully implemented.

2. To this end, the veterinarian of the area constituency shall draft a veterinary document whereby the disease is eradicated, as per the model under Annex nr. XIV to the current veterinary health norm. The veterinary documents whereby the disease has been eradicated shall be registered with the records of the Town Hall of the locality where the disease has developed, with the mayor signing that he/she has been notified .” (Order of the minister of agriculture and food 156/1999)

„Once the disease has been officially eradicated, for some of the diseases provided for in the special prevention and combating instructions, certain restrictions on the movement of animals which have gone through the disease shall be kept, as well as for the products coming from these animals or their fodder, which are equally mandatory as are the measures in the quarantine period. These measures shall be written in the document whereby the disease is officially eradicated to be drafted by the official veterinarian.” (art. 90 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

3.9. Knackery

„(1) Knackery units have the obligation to keep their veterinary record concerning animal waste which they have collected, while also recording the amounts they have collected, the means of transportation, and – as the case may be – their destination.

(2) The local council has the obligation to keep the veterinarian records, where individual animal breeders and animal holders are concerned, if the animals in the latter case are not meant for economic purposes.” (art. 8 in the Government Ordinance nr. 47/2005 on the regulations on neutralizing animal waste)

„(2) Local councils are in charge of neutralizing dead animals coming from individual animal breeders or the animals which were found dead in that territorial unit, and whose owners cannot be identified.

(3) Local councils have the obligation to either get their own incinerators/co-incinerators that need to be authorized and approved as per the legislation in force and which shall only be used for their own needs, or to contract services from a knackery unit.” (art. 9 in the Government Ordinance nr. 47/2005, modified by Law 73/2006 for approving the Government Ordinance 47/2005 on the regulations for neutralizing animal waste)

„(1) Individual animal breeders have the obligation to immediately notify the local council on the death of any animals that are concerned by the current ordinance.

(2) The local council which has been notified as per paragraph (1) has the obligation to immediately announce the knackery unit.

(3) Where remote localities are concerned, according to article 6 paragraph (2), carcasses shall be neutralized during a procedure organized by the local council.” (art. 10 in the Government Ordinance 47/2005, modified by Law 73/2006)

„The facts below are deemed to be contraventions and they shall be punished as follows:

a) fines going from 300 lei (RON) to 600 lei (RON):

1. failure to notify the knackery units or local councils within the established deadlines;
2. failure to take the necessary measures to store animal carcasses in farms or in processing facilities in conditions such that they would prevent the animals or humans from falling ill and the environment from being polluted;

b) fines going from 800 lei (RON) to 1.200 lei (RON):

1. failure to collect animal waste within the established deadlines;
2. failure to create the necessary veterinary records on animal waste as per the legal provisions in force or which concern any materials that may come from the waste neutralization and processing;
3. failure to take the measures provided for in the legislation in force on storing animal waste in the facilities involved in slaughtering, processing, storing or selling animal products or which are involved in neutralizing animal waste;
4. transporting, storing or handling animal waste in facilities which have not been authorized or approved for this activity, as per the legislation in force;

c) fines going from 1.000 lei (RON) to 2.000 lei (RON):

1. abandoning, disposing of or storing animal waste in facilities other than those which have been organized and authorized and /or approved for this purpose;
2. failure by the local councils to organize the burial places as per article 6 or failure to comply with the organization and functioning conditions;

d) fines going from 1.500 lei (RON) to 2.500 lei (RON):

1. failure to conclude a valid contract with a knackery unit or lack of their own animal waste neutralization equipment, as authorized and approved by the legislation at the level of the meat production, storage, processing or selling (or of any other animal products) facilities. In addition to these fines, the deed shall also be punished by withdrawing the approval and/or by cancelling the functioning permit, based on a notification by the control authorities via their managers;

2. failure of the local councils to conclude a valid contract with a knackery unit or failure to organize animal waste neutralization, as per legislation in force.” (art. 16 in the Government Ordinance number 47/2005)

4. Additional measures in case of an avian influenza hotbed appearing

4.1. Informing the population

„The authorities of the central and local public administration have the obligation to immediately render public any avian influenza hotbed, the restrictions that the anti-epizootic committees have imposed in the hotbed, the protection and surveillance area or any other areas which have been determined by the prophylactic surveillance programs and by the programs aimed at combating avian influenza, by any existing information means.” (art. 1, paragraph (2) in the Law nr. 221/2006)

„The mayor of the territorial and administrative unit, as chair of the local anti-epizootic committee has the obligation to notify any animal owner – irrespective of whether they are individuals or legal bodies – as well to put posters in public areas about the public measures imposed by the local and county antiepizootic committee on preventing and combating communicable diseases in animals.” (art. 2¹, paragraph. (1) in the Law nr. 221/2006)

„Communication with each and every animal owner shall be done directly, by writing a minutes which will prove that they have taken note and which they have to sign.” (art. 2¹, paragraph (2) in the Law number 221/2006)

4.2. Penalties on the failure to observe any legal provisions in force on informing the population

„Failure to observe the obligations under article 1 paragraph (2) as well as provisions under art. 2¹ paragraph (1) and (2) shall be deemed to be a crime and is punishable by one to three years in jail” (art. 9, para. (1¹) in the Law 221/2006)

5. Relationship of the authorities of the local public administration with the veterinarian health services

„The central and local public administration authorities have the obligation to collaborate with and support the official veterinarians and the freelance veterinarians who have been delegated to perform skills that are typical of the veterinarian health field”. (art. 17 in the Government Ordinance nr. 42/2004)

„The National Veterinary and Food Safety Authority can ask the local and central public administration to take the necessary legal action if need be or if there is any imminent risk for the animal health, public health, animal protection, environmental protection and animal safety”. (art. 11, bullet point 1 in the Government Ordinance nr. 42/2004)

Animal holder obligations

1. Registering and protecting the animals

„Animal holders in the population household sector have the following obligations:

i) to notify the local council about any animal which has been recently introduced in their farm in order to have them recorded in the agricultural registrar” (art. 7 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Animal holders have the following obligations:

- a) Notify the authorities about the number of poultry they have in their households;
- b) Keep their poultry in shelters, in clear cut areas, that would not allow for the wild bird droppings to get in, so that they do not come in contact with other birds in the neighbouring households or with any other wild birds.” (art. 2¹, paragraph (3) in the Law 221/2006)

2. Defending animal health and preventing the disease from being transmitted

„Defending animal health, animal protection, preventing the disease from being transmitted from animals to humans, safety of animal food meant for human consumption, sanitation of animal

fodder and environmental protection in relation with animal breeding is a state problem and a duty for all the inhabitants of the country”. (art. 1 in the Government Ordinance. 42/2004; article 1 in the Government Decision number 1415/2004 on granting indemnifications for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or in any other way affected, with a view to easily and rapidly doing away with the animal communicable disease hotbeds)

3. Taking care of the shelters– prophylactic disinfection

„1) Prophylactic disinfection is applicable to all animal farms or courtyards, to decontaminating shelters, stables on their inside in order to destroy infectious and parasite germs existing outside, with a view to preventing the disease from spreading to the animals.

2) Following a mechanical clean up operation, all shelters, paddocks, alleys, inner roads, sheds, fodder warehouse and other ancillary constructions shall be disinfected.” (art. 11 in the Veterinary Norm)

„1) In those farms which have an intensive animal breeding and feeding system, disinfections shall be performed after each and every shelter has been depopulated, according to the principle "everything full, everything empty" or any compartment, according to the veterinary health norms established for these units.

2) Prophylactic disinfection is to be conducted whenever necessary. In the cattle and sheep farms the disinfection is to be conducted during the spring, once the animals have been taken out to the pasture and during autumn, before they are taken to the stables

3) Shelters and fields of the summer camps and of the sheep-sheds shall be cleaned and disinfected both before and at the end of the pasture period. If cattle farms should be kept permanently in the stables and where porcine farms are concerned, animals will taken out to paddocks in order to clean and perform prophylactic disinfections in the shelters.” (art. 12 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„In the population household sector, animal holders shall take care of the animal shelters and keep them constantly clean, and at least once a year they shall disinfect and whitewash them using their own means.” (art. 13 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

4. Announcing the disease cases

„All animal holders as well as any person that through his/her activities comes in contact with animals or with animal products have the obligation to notify the local council or directly the Veterinary and Food Safety Authority in no more than 24 hours about any case of illness, suspicion of a disease, about the death or emergency slaughter of animals, as well as to notify any piece of information they have about such cases.

Animal farms, as well as military units who have their own veterinarian staff for providing care to the animals they have, shall notify the official veterinarian of the area veterinary constituency, only about the cases of communicable diseases in the animals or about any suspect cases.

The cases that are exempt from being announced are those that concern deliberate contaminations which have been performed to serve scientific purposes or for the bio-food production, in the facilities which have been granted the relevant authority for this purpose.” (art. 46 in the Norm on Veterinary Health)

„Until the official veterinarian arrives, the animal holders have the obligation to seal off any ill animals or animals that are believed to ill, to ban circulation of unauthorized people in the contaminated areas, to keep the bodies of the dead or slaughtered animals, to refrain from consuming and from giving away meat and products derived from these animals.” (art. 47 in the Veterinary Norm)

5. Penalties for failing to observe any provisions on announcing the cases of the disease

„The facts listed below and which have been perpetrated by animal owners – irrespective of whether they are individuals or legal bodies – are deemed to be crimes and they are punishable by fines going from 300 lei (RON) to 600 lei (RON):

- a) Failure to notify within 24 hours the relevant veterinary authority about any case of disease, death or emergency slaughter of some animals, as well as any information that they might have about such cases;
- b) Failure to isolate the animals that are ill or believed to be so, failure to keep the carcasses of the animals that died or of those who have been slaughtered and consuming or giving away the meat and the products coming from these animals until the veterinarian arrives;
- c) Failure to observe the restrictions on animal movement, which have been imposed by the relevant veterinary authority;

The contraventions and penalties provided for under paragraph (1) shall be dealt with by the policemen.” (art. 4¹, paragraph (1) and (2) in the Decision nr. 1580/2005 for changing and

amending the Government Decision 1415/2004 on granting indemnifications for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or otherwise affected, with a view to rapidly doing away with the animal communicable disease hotbeds)

„The people who have been fined for the aforesaid contraventions shall not be granted indemnities.” (art. 4² in the Decision nr. 1580/2005)

„All existing birds from outside the household shall be deemed not to have any owner, and therefore shall be seized and killed, and no indemnifications shall be granted.” (art. 9¹, in the Law nr. 221/2006)

6. Other obligations

„Animal holders have the obligation to separate animals that are ill or believed to be suffering from contagious diseases from other animals, so that a direct or indirect contact is prevented with the healthy animals, by means cohabitation, watering, stables tools, caretakers, fodder etc.” (art. 64 in the Veterinary Norm)

„The natural persons and legal bodies listed under art. 2 have the following obligations:

- a) to notify the County Food and Safety Directorate or the relevant Bucharest directorate about beginning or ceasing activities that are subject to veterinary and health monitoring and control;
- b) to provide the necessary support to the Veterinary and Food and Safety Authorities in their attempt to fulfil their attributions and responsibilities;
- c) to allow free, constant and unrestricted access of the veterinary and food and safety authorities enabling them to inspect, control, check and examine the objectives listed under art. 18 paragraph (1);
- d) to provide the local veterinary and food safety authorities with the necessary assistance during controls, inspections, verifications and examinations that they undertake to achieve their objectives, attributions and responsibilities;
- e) to notify right away the veterinary and food safety authorities and the local public administration about any suspicion or cases of diseases in animals, and until the veterinarian arrives, they should seal off any dead, killed or slaughtered animals, while banning using or selling the meat and other products and by-products coming of these animals, unless they have the approval to do so by the local veterinary and food safety authorities;

- f) to notify the local a veterinary and food safety authorities, within the deadline provided for in the specific legislation, about animals going in /out of the localities, giving away and purchasing animals, about any animals missing, or which died or have been slaughtered as well as about any other events in animal movement;
- g) to support the veterinary and food safety authorities in performing any public interest actions;
- h) to take the animals for the public interest veterinary health actions at the place, time and date that the delegated official or freelance veterinarian have set;
- ...
- r) to implement the veterinarian health measures in order to prevent animal diseases, as well as to help control and eradicate or prevent them from spreading across the territory;
- ... (art. 16 in the Government Ordinance nr. 42/2004)

Compensation procedure

1. Indemnification beneficiaries

„Where measurements undertaken to eradicate animal communicable disease hotbeds are concerned, including for suspect cases which require slaughtering or killing the animals, indemnifications shall be paid to the owners for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or otherwise affected, other than those they are entitled to get from the insurance and the money they can get from selling the products and by-products coming from animals which have been slaughtered, dead or killed”. (art. 2 in the Government Decision nr. 1580/2005).

„Indemnifications provided for under paragraph. (6) shall be covered from the state budget via the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, at replacement value as per the market price for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or otherwise affected, as the case may be according to the losses that the owner incurred, at the date when the disease hotbed was eradicated, while observing the terms established by Government Decision”. (art. 26, paragraph (7) in the Government Ordinance nr. 42/2004; art. 4, paragraph (1) in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

„According to the legislation in force, those who can receive compensations are the legal bodies and individuals that are animal owners, if they keep their animals according to the existing legal norms in force, with respect to the mandatory registration in the agricultural registrar, and who have incurred losses as a result of taking particularly important action to rapidly eradicate all

communicable disease hotbeds listed under annex nr. 1”. (art. 3, paragraph (1) in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004).

„Indemnifications are granted based on the documentation developed by the County and Food and Safety Directorate, or the relevant authority of Bucharest, endorsed by the directorate for agriculture and rural development at county level, or at the level of the relevant Bucharest authority.” (art. 3, paragraph 3 in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

„In case the communicable disease hotbeds are rapidly eradicated, indemnifications shall be granted if the animals are insured or not.” (art. 3, paragraph 4 in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

2. The evaluation committee

„The loss that the owner incurred by the owner as result of the animal having been slaughtered, killed or in any other way affected, at the date when the disease hotbed eradication action has been performed shall be determined by an evaluation committee that will include: the expert in zootechnical performance improvement and reproduction (UARZ) from the county directorate for agriculture and rural development, or from the relevant Bucharest committee, the official veterinarian from the area veterinary constituency at the level of the veterinary and food safety directorate at county level and at the level of the relevant Bucharest authority, the expert from the local agricultural consulting centre, agricultural agent, the mayor of the locality or its representatives .” (art. 4, paragraph 2 in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

„The replacement value of the animal shall be determined depending on the genetic, zootechnical value, on gender, age, weight, physiological condition, production category, at market price at the date when the disease hotbed eradication action took place.” (art. 4, paragraph 3 in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

3. Necessary documentation

„The documentation drafted according to the legislation in force by the natural person or legal body – that is an animal owner – and by the official veterinarian of the area veterinary constituency shall be approved by the director and by the head accountant of the county directorate

for agriculture and rural development, or at the level of the relevant Bucharest authority.” (art. 5 in the Government Decision nr. 1415/2004)

„Indemnifications shall be paid to the owners of the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or in any other way affected to rapidly eradicate the animal communicable disease hotbeds based on the settlement document needed to set and pay for the indemnifications due to the animal owners, according to the model in Annex . 3, organized per species and animal categories.” (art. 1 in the Methodological norm on financing expenditure incurred as a result of granting indemnifications for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or in any other way affected to rapidly eradicate the animal communicable disease hotbeds, approved by Government Decision nr. 1415/2004, hereinafter referred to as the Methodological Norm)

„The documentation drafted by the animal owner – be that an individual or a legal body – and by the official veterinarian at the level of the veterinary constituency is approved by the county veterinary and food safety directorate, and by the relevant Bucharest authority, shall be submitted for endorsement with the directorate for agriculture and rural development, and with that at the level of the Bucharest authority, and includes the following working documents:

- a) substantiation letter which includes the epizootologic investigations and the actions taken for the rapid eradication of the communicable disease hotbed, drafted by the official veterinarian of the veterinary health constituency where the disease has been identified and announced;
- b) certificate of findings, issued by the official veterinarian of the area veterinary health constituency where the disease has been identified, according to the model presented under annex nr. 1;
- c) the evaluation slip drafted and signed by the evaluation committee, as per the model in annex nr. 2;
- d) copies of the analysis bulletins issued by the public veterinary health laboratories or, in the case of tuberculosis, the copy of the result of the TB analysis;
- e) minutes concluded and the veterinary certificates for the transport of livestock, issued by the official veterinarian of the area veterinary health constituency for the private animal breeders;
- f) documents certifying the money that the animal owners cashed as a result of selling the animals they killed, if applicable;
- g) a statement, whereby they assume responsibility for any lack of insurance of the animal(s), if applicable;
- h) settlement document, according to the model provided for under annex nr. 3. (art. 2 in the methodological norm)

Legislative acts

1. Order of the minister of agriculture and food 156/1999 for approving the Veterinarian Health Norm on announcing, declaring and notifying communicable diseases in animals (Published in the Official Journal, Part I nr. 123 dated March 23rd /2000). The act entered into force on March 23rd 2000.
2. Government Ordinance number 42/2004 on organizing the health activity (Published in the Official Journal, Part I issue 94 dated January 31st 2004). The act entered into force on January 31st 2004.
3. Law nr. 215/2004 for approving the Government Ordinance number 42/2004 on organizing veterinarian activity (published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 531 dated June 14th 2004). The act entered into force on June 17 the 2004.
4. Government Decision number 1415/2004 on granting indemnities for animals which have been slaughtered, killed or otherwise affected, with a view to rapidly eradicating the hotbeds of communicable diseases in animals (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 837 dated 10/09/2004). The act entered into force on September 10th 2004.
5. The Government emergency ordinance nr. 88/2004 changing and amending the Government Ordinance number 42/2004 on organizing the veterinarian health activity and for food safety (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 1053 dated November 12th 2004). The act entered into force on November 12th 2004.
6. Order of the president of the National Authority for Veterinarian Health and for Food Safety nr. 26/2005 for approving the Veterinarian Health Norm on the general measures to be taken for preventing and combating infectious-contagious and parasite diseases in animals (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 230 dated March 18th 2005). The act entered into force on March 18th 2005.
7. Law number 127/2005 on approving the Government Emergency Ordinance number 88/2004 for changing and amending the Government Ordinance number 42/2004 on organizing the veterinary health activity and for food safety (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I nr. 420 din 18/05/2005). The act entered into force on May 21st 2005.
8. Government Ordinance nr. 47/2005 on the regulations for neutralizing animal waste (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 778 dated August 26th 2005). The act entered into force on August 29th 2005.

9. Government Decision number 1580/2005 for changing and amending Government Decision number 1415/2004 on granting indemnifications for the animals which have been slaughtered, killed or otherwise affected, with a view to rapidly eradicating any hotbeds of communicable diseases in animals (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 1181 dated December 28th 2005). The act entered into force on December 28th 2005.
10. Order of the Minister of Health number 31/2006 for approving the Methodology for monitoring the cases of avian influenza to human (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 52 dated January 19th 2006). The act entered into force on January 19th 2006.
11. The Government Emergency Ordinance nr. 11/2006 on the measures that are applicable for monitoring, combating and eradicating avian influenza in Romania (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I issue 184 dated February 27th 2006). The act entered into force on February 27th 2006.
12. Law 73/2006 for approving the Government Ordinance nr. 47/2005 on the regulations applicable for neutralizing animal waste (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I nr. 285 din 29/03/2006). The act entered into force on April 1st 2006.
13. Law number 221/2006 for approving the Government Emergency Ordinance nr. 11/2006 on the measures that are applicable for monitoring, combating and eradicating avian influenza in Romania (Published in the Official Gazette, Part I nr. 482 dated June 02nd 2006). The act entered into force on June 5th 2006.

**MINISTRY OF
HEALTH**

NoEN6143/12.01.2006

**MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORTS,
CONSTRUCTIONS AND
TOURISM**

No165GHD/13.01.2006.

**MINISTRY OF
ADMINISTRATION AND
OF THE INTERIOR**

No3120/13.01.2006.

**CUSTOMS
NATIONAL
AUTHORITY**

No2735/13.01.2006.

**VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY
NATIONAL AUTHORITY**

No166/13.01.2006

PROTOCOL

With a view to ensuring public health against bird flu infection by optimising the cooperation among the authorities with attributions and responsibilities in the field, among the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Administration and the Interior, Customs National Authority, the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism and the Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority

*the present **protocol** was concluded:*

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to protect public health through the establishment of an efficient cooperative framework among the authorities responsible for the implementation of measures needed in order to prevent the outbreak and transmission of bird flu to humans on the territory of Romania.

Attributions and responsibilities

The attributions and responsibilities of each signatory party are the following:

I. THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

1. Through the County Public Health Directorates and that of Bucharest as well as through the subordinated healthcare facilities, it ensures the epidemiological and clinical supervision of people in bird flu hotbeds, of the intervention staff in these hotbeds as well as that of the medical staff in health units where medical assistance is given to

suspect, possible, probable and confirmed patients and to the persons they have entered in contact with.

2. Ensures necessary care for all suspect/possible/probable/confirmed patients in the healthcare units designated by the Ministry of Health according to the regulations in force.
3. Ensures transportation of suspect bird flu patients to the Infectious Disease Institute 'Prof. Matei Balș' – Bucharest.
4. Makes available informative materials regarding case definitions and procedures to be followed when a suspect bird flu case is detected.
5. Coordinates the distribution of State of Health Statement Forms to the authorities which were assigned the distribution of the forms to travellers.
6. Coordinates the collecting, centralizing and processing of the State of Health Statement Forms and implements the measures provided in the methodology of bird flu supervision in humans for each case.
7. Suspect cases will immediately be reported by phone to the County Public Health Directorate which will immediately inform the Public Health Directorate within the Ministry of Health in accordance with the methodology of bird flu supervision in humans.
8. Coordinates the activity of all authorities involved in the implementation of measures for the prevention and control of bird flu in humans.
9. Provides preventive and curative medical assistance to the staff involved in specific activities from its own structures and from ministries with their own sanitary network.
10. Develops procedures regarding the information flow between the Ministry of Health staff and that of other signatory authorities as well as that of detailed specific activities/type of unit and procedures regarding forwarding the information to the involved structures.

II. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTS, CONSTRUCTIONS AND TOURISM

1. At the Central Anti-epizootic Committee's request, it is involved in setting up disinfection points on European and national roads with a view to isolating quarantined areas or areas under supervision and ensures vehicles disinfection.
2. Places road disinfecting filters on both directions of travel, at the entrance or exit in/ from harbours and airports subordinated to or under the authority of the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism. It also places a mobile disinfection filter at the entrance of the Official Room and Cargo Tarom as well as for occasional access to the airport premises.
3. Ensures weekly volumetric disinfections of passengers in the Internal Departures – Arrivals, International Departures – Arrivals terminals and in the Official Room signalling them accordingly.
4. Ensures the distribution of informative brochures and materials regarding the symptoms of bird flu in humans and prevention measures to be taken in harbours and airports subordinated to or under the authority of the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism.
5. Together with the Customs Sanitary Veterinary Directorate it ensures the sanitary-veterinary inspection of travellers' luggage coming from or having transited countries with bird flu cases.
6. Places car sanitary filters at the entrance or exit in/ from harbours and airports subordinated to or under the authority of the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism.

7. Ensures the sanitary/ sanitary-veterinary control of catering products given to passengers in airplanes as well as the incineration of domestic garbage.
8. Ensures the distribution of State of Health Statement Forms to boat, airplane and train passengers, to international road users going to or coming from countries with bird flu cases.

III. MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION AND OF THE INTERIOR

1. Together with the customs authorities enforces measures according to its competencies at customs checkpoints as well as in other areas indicated by the Ministry of Health and the Veterinary and Food Safety National Authority.
2. Intervenes in implementing all restrictive measures imposed by the epidemiological situation observing the orders given by MH and VFSNA or by the Central Anti-epizootic Committee.
3. Together with the sanitary veterinary authorities it is involved in specific activities of identifying animal transports and animal products coming from risk areas.
4. Ensures the distribution of State of Health Statement Forms at terrestrial customs checkpoints.
5. The MAI staff used in the hotbeds will be immunized in emergency situations by the local Directorate for Public Health assisted by the local medical MAI department.
6. Supports the local MH sanitary authority by distributing informative and educational health materials on particular topics.

IV. VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY NATIONAL AUTHORITY

1. Depending on the international epidemiological situation, it imposes restrictions on the transit and imports of livestock and animal products and by-products from countries with suspect or confirmed bird flu cases notified by the authorized international authorities (O.I.E., C.E.E., etc).
2. Ensures that the necessary specialized sanitary-veterinary staff intervenes in bird flu hotbeds as well as in customs points and takes measures in accordance with their competencies.
3. Provides the disinfectant substances and the protective equipment for the hotbed intervention staff.

V. NATIONAL CUSTOMS AUTHORITY

1. The National Customs Authority staff in the customs points together with the VFSNA representatives check the observance of the measures imposed by the Authority with respect to the import of animal products and by-products as well as live pets.

Final provisions

Each signatory authority is responsible for fulfilling all acknowledged duties stipulated in the present Protocol either directly, through its own apparatus or through the authorities or the institutions subordinated to it, coordinated by it or under its authority according their own organizing and functioning regulations.

This **protocol** was made in 5 original copies, one for each signatory authority and will enter into force upon the date of its signing.

**MINISTRY OF
HEALTH**

Minister,

Eugen Nicolaescu

**MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORTS,
CONSTRUCTIONS AND
TOURISM**

Minister,

Gheorghe Dobre

**MINISTRY OF
ADMINISTRATION AND OF
THE INTERIOR**

Minister,

Vasile Blaga

**CUSTOMS
NATIONAL
AUTHORITY**

Vicepresident,

Gelu Stefan Diaconu

**VETERINARY AND FOOD
SAFETY NATIONAL
AUTHORITY**

President,

Ion Agafitei

PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING BIRD FLU TRANSMISSION TO BIRDS

Key messages, grouped according to the topics, for farmers and other people who come in contact with wild or birds or poultry on a regular basis.

Note: Although all of the messages below are important and useful for preventing and controlling bird flu, some of them may become more important depending on various local contexts; at the same time, there will be moments when certain information will be particularly important. Users must be able to select those messages which are adequate to the local conditions and to the stage that the bird flu is at (the stage prior to the hotbed outburst, during the outbreak and the stage following the closure of the outbreak) and turn them into adequate messages, using the local idioms and language. The table provides information on the importance of various messages for one stage or another. When a box is checked, it means that the message is important for that particular stage, while those boxes where there is a horizontal line show that the message is inadequate for that particular stage.

There is a new disease, called avian influenza (bird flu) which is more serious than other diseases affecting poultry.

PRELIMINARY STAGE = P
OUTBREAK PER SE = I
LATER STAGE = U

- Avian influenza can very rapidly kill the poultry in a farm. All the bird species can get the avian influenza and they can transmit it to other birds (chicken, ducks, gees, spanes, turkeys, pigeons, wild birds and even poultry)

- Poultry and people can catch the disease via excrements, mucus, blood or feathers coming from the infected birds, be they poultry or wild birds .

Bird flu is similar to other diseases which affect the poultry, particularly the Newcastle disease . Although you may feel you know what caused the death of your poultry, you still need to inform the authorities to be sure.

Infected birds can spread the disease before there are any signs of the disease.

Some birds, like for example ducks, can catch and spread the disease, without showing any signs of the disease.

- Birds which have been vaccinated against the bird flu may catch the disease and not show any signs of it.

	P	I	U
• Avian influenza can very rapidly kill the poultry in a farm. All the bird species can get the avian influenza and they can transmit it to other birds (chicken, ducks, gees, spanes, turkeys, pigeons, wild birds and even poultry)	v	v	v
• Poultry and people can catch the disease via excrements, mucus, blood or feathers coming from the infected birds, be they poultry or wild birds .	v	v	
Bird flu is similar to other diseases which affect the poultry, particularly the Newcastle disease . Although you may feel you know what caused the death of your poultry, you still need to inform the authorities to be sure.	v	v	
Infected birds can spread the disease before there are any signs of the disease.	v	v	
Some birds, like for example ducks, can catch and spread the disease, without showing any signs of the disease.			
• Birds which have been vaccinated against the bird flu may catch the disease and not show any signs of it.		v	v

If you find any dead or ill birds, you should report that to the authorities right away.

Report immediately to the authorities if there is a large number of sudden deaths amongst the birds.

- Report immediately to the authorities any cases of birds falling ill.

Report immediately to the authorities any cases of wild birds falling ill or dying

Protect your community –getting in touch right away with the authorities will prevent the virus from spreading towards other farms in the near area.

P	I	U
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	
	v	

If you find any dead or ill birds, handle them properly.

- Do not touch the carcasses or ill birds with your bare hands; use gloves (or plastic bags if don't have gloves).
- Remove the birds carcasses adequately. Use gloves and a mask as well as a shovel and a stick to put them in a bag or another recipient. Keep these recipients away from people and animals until the authorities arrive and they inspect the situation.
- Do not throw the dead birds in the rivers, lakes or other water surfaces.
- If you notice that one or several birds look ill, you don't have to leave them in the courtyard; take them out of the group, using gloves and keep them in a sealed off area. Then you must get in touch with the authorities right away

(veterinarians or those who work in services that are related to agriculture).

v	v	v
	v	
	v	
	v	

If your poultry or that of the neighbours have fallen ill or died because of the avian influenza, it is important to kill the birds who survived and to disinfect the farm or the courtyard.

- Not all infected birds show signs of the disease.
- Bird flu does not infect just you and your household, but it affects the entire community; this is why it is important that you kill all the ill birds as well as those who live in their vicinity.
- You have the responsibility to protect your family and neighbours. If your birds or any of those in the neighbourhood have caught the disease, you need to agree and allow for the birds to be killed.

You must not kill the birds yourselves, but you must wait for the people who have been sent by the authorities to arrive and they will handle the problem adequately.

- Once the birds have been killed, you need to observe the instructions given to you by the authorities in order to get

v	v	v
	v	
	v	
	v	
	v	

compensations and your household disinfected.

If you are involved in killing the birds, you must use safe and humane methods for doing that.

P I U

- Process each group of birds separately; clean and disinfect every cage before bringing another group of birds.
 - Clean and disinfect the equipment and the vehicles going in and out of the farm thoroughly (including the tyres and chassis).
 - Adopt the adequate bio-safety methods: use personal equipment and disinfectants.

	v	
	v	
	v	

Do not bring the virus to your farm from other farms or markets.

Make sure that you brush and/or wash your footwear or the wheels of your bike/motorbike and that you change your clothes once you have come back from farms or markets where live birds are sold, so that you do not bring the virus into the house through your clothes, footwear or equipment

Clean and disinfect all the objects you introduce in your farm and which might have come in contact with the chicken or with the excrements from outside the farm, including your clothes, tools and equipments, such as cages, bicycles and car tyres.

- Do not borrow any equipment or vehicles from other farms.
- Do not transport any live or dead birds (chicken, ducks or other birds) from one place to another, if you feel that you birds are healthy.
- Do not introduce into your farm any animals coming from other farms(chicken, ducklings, piglets).
- Do not buy and do not accept any animals, eggs or manure coming from other farms.

Those birds which you have been unable to sell must be kept separately, for at least 14 days before they are taken back into the farm again.

	v	
	v	
-	v	-
	v	

Keep your poultry away from the wild birds or from any other poultry wandering free.

- Keep all the poultry in a sealed off area, surrounded by a fence, away from other wild animals and birds.
 - Keep all hens away from the ducks and other birds that wander free. Keep all the birds away from any source of water that might have been contaminated by the wild birds.
- The birds coming from outside into the farm /household need to be kept separately from the rest of the birds, for at least 14 days.

	v	
	v	
	v	
v	v	v

Clean all the areas where the birds are kept, on a regular basis.

P I U

Burn or bury the feathers as well as any other remains, in an area away from the farm. Burn the waste deep down, covering it with limescale, so that the animals that feed on carcasses be unable to dig them out.

- On a daily basis, you must clean or sweep away the faeces and the food which has not been eaten by the birds, taking them away from the courtyard.
- Allow the manure to decompose for several weeks, so that any potential virus may die before the manure is used as fertilizer.

N	v	v
	v	

Vaccination can help protect your birds

- If the authorities should recommend vaccination, take your birds to be vaccinated.
- Vaccination helps protect the birds from the disease, but not from the infection; vaccinated birds can catch avian flu; there is a certain risk for the disease to be transmitted.

	v	v
	v	v

PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING BIRD FLU TRANSMISSION

from BIRDS TO HUMAN

The key elements of the message (both for the general population and for the farmers), grouped according to the topics. The right hand columns show how adequate the messages for each of the three stages are: the stage prior to the outbreak, the outbreak per se and the later stage (the stage after the outbreak).

It is very difficult that human beings can catch the avian influenza, but, if you have the symptoms of serious respiratory disease, ask for care.

- If you fall ill and get a fever after you have come in contact with the ill or dead birds, ask for treatment right away.
- If you suspect that a person has caught the avian influenza, take that person to the doctor right away.

P	I	U
v	v	v
v	v	v

Avoid direct contact with the birds.

- Do not touch the carcass or the ill birds barehanded; Use gloves.
 - If the birds need to be kept inside (for example in winter time, in the cold climate area), keep them in a certain area, away from the place where your family eats and sleeps.
 - Do not bring/ don't let the birds in the house.
- If possible, don't allow the children to collect the eggs and keep them away from the birds, including pet birds but which are not always kept in the house.
- Do not allow the children to help cut or cook poultry or wild birds.

v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v

Take the necessary precautionary methods if by any chance you should happen to get in contact with the birds or with the faces coming from birds in an affected area.

Every time when you get in contact with wild birds or poultry or with bird droppings, wash your hands carefully with water and soap (or ash, in case you don't have any soap).

- Take your footwear off, outside the house, and clean the dirt away carefully.
- If you should get a fever, go to the doctor right away or to the closest medical facility.

v	v	v
	v	
	v	

Take precautions when you cook and when you eat poultry and eggs

- The biggest risk of becoming exposed to the avian influenza virus is generated by killing and handling the infected birds. Remember that not all infected birds show signs of the disease, so that you should be careful when killing a bird.
- Accurate hygiene practices are essential when killing the birds and when handling the meat to prevent exposure to the risk via raw meat or cross contamination from other foodstuffs, meat preparation areas or equipment.
- Store raw meat, of any nature away from the rest of the foodstuffs

After you have cut the raw meat, wash your hands and also wash the mincing tool, the knife and the board with warm water and detergent; if necessary, you must also use chlorine

- Do not consume any eggs or blood unless they are very well cooked (extensively). Do not eat soft eggs or meat that is not well cooked. In order to be safe, the whites and yolks of the eggs that were cooked need to be hard. Raw eggs should not be used in foodstuffs that are not going to be cooked afterwards
- Eggs may contain the avian influenza virus both on the outside (on the shell) and on the inside (whites and yolks), this is why it is important that you wash your hands after touching the eggs and that you cook them well.

The avian influenza virus cannot be destroyed by freezing or refrigerating it, it can only be destroyed via thermal processing (at temperatures of at least 70 degrees Celsius, in all the components of any foodstuff)

P I U

v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
v	v	v
	v	v
	v	v

Practice an adequate general hygiene

- Wash your hands with water and soap (or if you don't have any soap you can use ash or if you don't have any soap, use ash) before and after you have touched the foodstuffs
- Wear masks and gloves when you handle poultry meat or meat coming from other types of birds
- If you can, change your clothes once you have arrived to your workplace, especially if you have birds in your yard or if you come in contact with birds on your way to work.

v	v	v
	v	
-	v	-

Take precautions when visiting farms or other areas where birds are kept

- When visiting a farm or going into a courtyard where birds are kept, wash your hands with water and soap (or if you don't have any soap, with ash) and do the same thing after you leave the area.

v	v	v
---	---	---

- Brush and disinfect the clothes, the shoes and the wheels of the bicycles/motorbikes /etc. after you leave the area, especially before you walk into the house
- Because of the major exposure risk while birds are killed , the people who deal with that need to wear adequate protection equipment such as : protection clothes, masks, glasses, boots and gloves.
- The people who are involved in killing the birds a decontamination procedure should follow a decontamination procedure when they take off their protective equipment
- Workers who are involved in the mass killing of the birds, in transporting and burying/burning the bodies should be vaccinated with the current human flu vaccine (in order to prevent co-infection with avian and human viral strains).
- People who are exposed to infected birds should be carefully monitored by the local health authorities
- Clean and disinfect the equipment and the vehicles thoroughly (including the tyres and the chassis) coming in and out of the farm.
- Make sure that all the equipment that is used to kill the birds is disposed of adequately or disinfected and stored away from the other equipment and that it is not left within children's reach.

	v	
	v	
	v	
	v	
	v	
	v	
	v	

PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING BIRD FLU TRANSMISSION *FROM HUMAN TO HUMAN*

The key elements of the message (both for the general population and for the farmers), grouped according to the topics. The right hand columns show how adequate the messages for each of the three stages are: the stage prior to the outbreak, the outbreak per se and the later stage (the stage after the outbreak).

Transmission of the avian influenza from human to human is extremely rare, but possible.

- It is assumed that there are several cases of transmission from human to human ; all these cases require direct contact with people who have been infected with avian influenza
- If you are taking care of someone who is suffering from avian influenza or who is a suspect case of avian influenza ask for guidance from a physician to find out how to protect yourselves

	P	I	U
	v	v	
		v	

Find out what you need to do if you think that either you or someone else is suffering from avian influenza

- If you feel sick after having come in contact with someone who is suffering from avian influenza, go to the doctor right away for treatment
- If you suspect that someone is suffering from avian influenza, go right away with that person
- Before getting to the doctor with that particular person, you need to take specific protective action: wash your hands often, wear a mask and ask that person to cover their mouth or their nose with a piece of cloth (unless it makes it more difficult for them to breath), and limit the number of people who come to less than a meter from the ill person
 - Contact the family physician or the public health authority for additional guidance

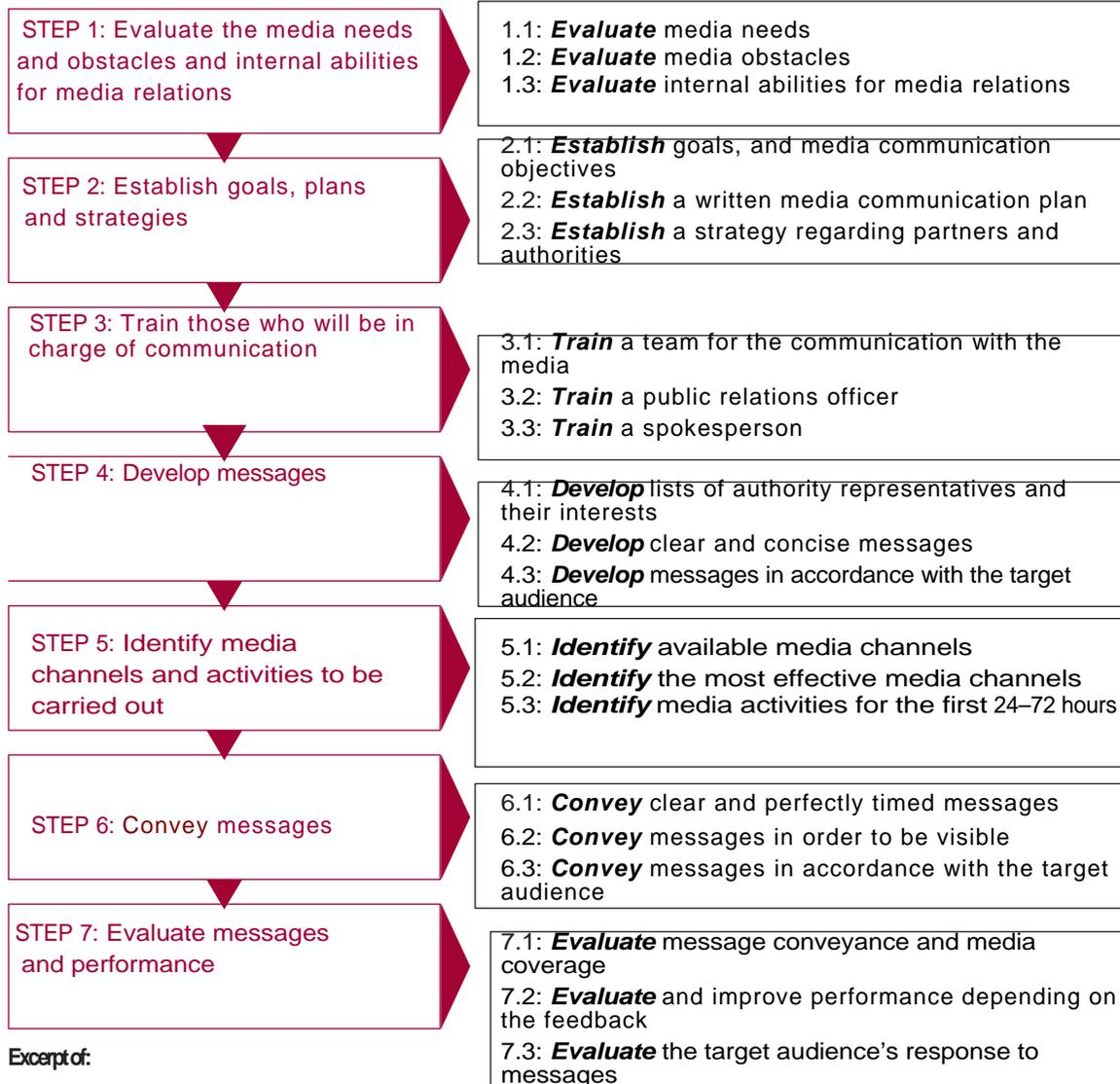
	v	v
v	v	
v	v	v
	v	

Practice an adequate hygiene at home and in public

- Wash your hands often, using warm water and soap. If you don't have any soap in hand, use ash
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or nose with a tissue
- If possible, do not go to work, to school, do not go out to solve other issues when you have the symptoms of a respiratory disease, including the symptoms of a more serious cold.

v	v	v
v	v	v
	v	

SEVEN STEPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEDIA COMMUNICATION DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES



Excerpt of:

Most frequently asked questions when talking to the media:

- **Who** is affected?
- **Who** is to blame?
- **Who** is responsible?
- **What** has happened?
- **What** is the cost?
- **Where** has this happened?
- **What** is being done?
- **When** has this happened?
- **Why** has this happened?
- **Why** hasn't this been prevented?
- **Will** this happen again?

For a complete list of the most frequent 77 questions, check the WHO brochure.

When you want to go back to key points and redirect the conversation, use transition phrases:

- „What is most important to know is that”
- „Nevertheless, it is more important to look at...”
- „Still, the real problem is here....”
- „This is what it all means...”
- „It is important to remember that ...”
- „Having said that, if we take a look at the broader picture. . .”
- „Having said that, if we look back. . .”
- „Let's try and have a broader perspective . . .”
- „If we are to look at the broader picture. . .”
- „Allow me to put things in a perspective by saying that. . .”
- „What it all tells me is that ...”
- „Before I go on, allow me to go back a little and repeat once more that. . .”
- „Before I go on, allow me to emphasise that . . .”
- „This is an important point, because”
- “Actually, it all comes down to...”
- “The essence is that...”

Effective Media Communication during Public Health Emergencies(Comunicare eficientă cu mass media în timpul urgențelor de sănătate publică): WHO brochure.

Hyer RN and Covello VT. Geneva, World Health Organization (WHO/CDS/2005.31) 2005; July.

For a full list of 33 transition phrases, check the WHO brochure.

THINGS TO REMEMBER IN DEVELOPING AND CONVEYING MESSAGES

When you develop your messages:

- establish three key points to synthesise the essence of your messages;
- develop elements to support the messages;
- develop additional materials, such as visual aids, examples, quotations, personal stories, analogies and support from credible third parties;
- use simple and short messages; and
- practice message conveyance.

In order to convey spontaneity – develop messages which:

- render the risk more spontaneous because they offer options and the possibility to choose;
- encourage dialogue and public debate;
- ask for permission; and
- ask for knowledgeable consent.

In order to convey controllability – develop messages which:

- pinpoint things that people can do (for instance, precautionary measures and prevention actions);
- show willingness to cooperate and share authority and responsibility with others;
- cast important parts and responsibilities to others;
- tell people how to identify problems or symptoms; and
- tell people how and where to get more information.

In order to communicate familiarity – develop messages which:

- rely on analogies in order to render the unknown more familiar
- encourage learning by experience;
- have a high visual content; and
- present means to explore things at depth

In order to convey correctness – develop messages which:

- accept possible inequalities;
- deal with inequalities; and
- discuss options and changes.

In order to convey trust – develop messages which:

- involve credible third parties;
- involve credible sources in order to attain more information;
- accept other points of view;
- convey the willingness to be held accountable;
- describe achievements;
- convey compliance with the highest professional, scientific and ethical standards;
- mention scientific research;
- mention the partners you work with; and
- convey willingness to share risks.

When conveying messages during an emergency:

- acknowledge and accept anger, frustration, fear, outrage or concern;
- emphasise three or more positive aspects to counterbalance negative information or bad news;
- accept and involve the audience and the media as legitimate partners;
- convey by your actions, gestures and words that you share their concern;
- listen carefully to what people are interested in;
- convey passion, conviction and optimism through your actions, words and gestures;
- speak in clear, simple terms and on a calm tone of voice – avoid technical terms, long phrases and words; and
- gain trust by admitting that there are things you don't know.

When you coordinate a press conference or any other media official event:

- be as concise as possible in the official statement;
- include all the relevant information in your statement and allow time for questions;
- limit the number of speakers to no more than three and allocate 3-5 minutes for each speaker;
- keep in mind that the main goal is for the media to ask questions, not to attend a lecture; and
- start on time – journalists have deadlines and they need enough time to put together their article about you.

When you address affected populations:

- identify the information they need the most in order to protect themselves;
- use very clear means and formats for conveying the information and; and
- use various formal and informal channels, as well as community meetings, interactive stand-up presentations, radio shows and posters.

When you communicate through the media, during an emergency:

- inform the media immediately after the incident;
- fill in information gaps;
- if needed, state that the information is preliminary;
- state that the media will be informed as additional information surfaces;
- state facts and things that are certain – avoid speculating about uncertain things;
- organize regular briefing sessions (for instance, every other hour), even if nothing has changed;
- mention when you expect to receive new information;
- set up special telephone lines and information telephony services and make them available to all interested parties;
- establish a non-stop media communication centre;
- decide the time intervals at which new information is to be communicated, who will communicate it and how; and
- use press conferences, briefing sessions and one-on-one interviews.

PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Below you will find a short summary of the principles and techniques to be used for an efficient communication with the media. The summary is based on a review of the specialized literature. There is a seven step presentation of these principles and techniques. These steps have been repeated and summarized here in order to help the reader.

I. Principles and techniques

1. Accept the media as a legitimate partner

- Accept the fact that an efficient communication with the media, in an emergency or crisis situation:
 - Allows for the media to play a constructive role in protecting public health;
 - Allows for the public health officials – in cooperation with the media – to build confidence, to calm down a nervous public, to provide the necessary information, to encourage cooperative behaviours and to save lives.
- Show respect to the media, by giving information on the decisions and the action that have been taken.
- Establish positive working conditions with the contact people in the media, before an emergency situation breaks out.
- Include the journalists in the planning exercise concerning the response to a public emergency.
- Be polite and kind no matter the situation, even though the journalists may not be.
- Do not put the reporters in an embarrassing situation.
- Provide information to the reporters who have arrived on site, in the areas where there are public phones, accommodation, hotels and restaurants.
- Do not be defensive or argumentative during the interviews.
- During the interviews, drop several elements that would make the story interesting for the media using examples, stories and other issues that influence the perception that the public has on risks, concern and violence.
- Use a wide range of media communication channels to engage and get the people involved.
- Adopt the highest ethical standards – admit that people might think you are responsible professionally and morally.
- Try to inform the editors in chief and the reports on the capacity of the organization to cope with a public health emergency.
- Volunteer to deal with the follow up action for all the issues that cannot be dealt with right away.
- Try to find win-win solutions for both you and the media.
- Involve the media in the training and development exercises.

2. Prepare thoroughly and carefully for any kind of interaction with the media

- Evaluate the cultural diversity and the socio-economic level of the target populations.
- Evaluate the internal capacities of media relations.
- Acknowledge the fact that all communication activities and materials should be a fair, representative and all-encompassing reflection of the variety of the societies.
- Start any planning communication planning effort by setting clear and explicit goals, such as:
 - Information and education;
 - Improving the level of knowledge and understanding;
 - Building, maintaining and restoring trust;
 - Providing guidance towards and encouraging some adequate attitudes, decisions, actions and behaviours and
 - Encouraging dialogue, collaboration and cooperation.
- Develop a written communication plan.
- Develop a written communication strategy with your partners.
- Ask for coordination in situations involving several agencies.
- Identify the stakeholders as well as the relevant subgroups amongst the audience, to be targets for your messages.
- Prepare a limited number of key messages before any public health emergencies occur.
- Post key messages and additional information on the website, which is very popular.
- Test your messages before using them during the interviews.
- Respect diversity and multiculturalism when creating the messages.
- Train your key staff– including your technical staff– in terms of the media communication skills, beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.
- Practise communication skills on a regular basis.
- Never say anything “off the record”, meaning nothing that you do not want to be given credit for.
- Recruit spokespeople who have an impressive attitude as well as personal interaction skills.
- Give training courses for the high government officials, who play a major part in the communication with the media.
- Give elaborate discussion points to the people who play an important part in the communication with the media.
- Acknowledge value and compensate the spokespeople who manage to get their key messages to be included in media stories.
- Anticipate questions and issues that might be raised during the interview.
- Train your spokespeople as to how they should redirect an interview (or how to bring the interview back on track, to the original topic), by using linking words such as „what is really important to know is...”.
- Agree with the reporter in advance on the logistics and topic of the discussion– for example on the duration, the location and the specific topic of the interview, but you must also be aware of the fact that the reporter might try to get off topic.
- Change the strategy and the messages, if necessary, depending on the monitoring activities, on the evaluation efforts and on the feedback.
- Be proactive in effort to build stories rather than waiting for the others to develop their stories and then react.
- Carefully assess the communication efforts with the media and learn from mistakes.
- Share with other people what you have learned by working with the media.

3. Meet the functioning needs of the media

- Assess the needs of the media.
- Be accessible to the reporters.
- Meet the deadlines they set.
- Accept the fact that the news reporters will simplify and shorten your messages.
- In case there is an emergency, set a regular information schedule for the media, although the latest information you have is not “worth being in the news”, according to their standards – an open regular kind of communication will help build trust and will fill the information gaps.
- For more information, recommend the journalists to check your Internet website.
- Keep a limited number of messages for the interviews.
- Repeat key messages several times during the press conferences or the interviews.
- Give accurate, adequate and useful information, which you have chosen depending on the needs of any type of media, such as audio fragments, recordings and other video materials for the TV stations.
- Provide the reporters with additional materials. These can be posted on your internet website and they can be included in the information packages for the media.
- Be careful when giving figures to the reporters– they can be easily misinterpreted or misunderstood.
- During the interview, stay on track– do not get off topic.
- If you do not have the answer to one of the questions, focus on what you do know, and tell the reporter the action that you are going to take in order to get an answer and communicate this piece of information in time.
- If you are asked for a piece of information that is in someone else’s area of expertise or in that of a different organization, recommend the reporter that he/she should go approach that particular person or organization.
- Give the reporters the opportunity to conduct further interviews with experts in this field.
- Try to be specific, while also respecting the reporter’s desire to get information.
- Organize communication sessions with the media, during which your partners are available to answer questions, at the same place and at the same time.
- Be careful: an accurate report can be beneficial for both the reporter and the organization.
- Before an emergency situation occurs, meet the editors-in-chief and the reporters that are going to present the news.
- Make efforts to establish long term relationships with the reporters and the editors-in-chief.
- Promise only what can be given and keep your word.

4. Be honest and open to the reporters

- Be the first to share any bad news on a certain issue or on your organization, but make sure that you put this news in a certain context.
- If you do not know the answer to one of the questions or if you are not sure of the answer, and if the reporter is not going live, then show your willingness to get in touch with him/her, after a while, to give him/her the answer.
- Be the first to reveal information about an emergency situation and be proactive, showing your reservations on the data and information accuracy.

- Accept the fact that most of the journalist will show a kind of “healthy scepticism” when it comes to sources and that one needs to earn his/her credibility with the media– do not ask for anyone to take your word for anything.
- Ask the reporter to ask the question again, in case you have misunderstood it.
- Organize regular events with the media to fill the information gaps.
- Do not minimize or do not exaggerate the risk level.
- Accept lack of safety.
- Be careful when comparing the risks of an event with another event’s risk.
- Do not give unreasonable reassurance (which is not guaranteed by the available information).
- If any errors were made or if there are any new facts, make the necessary corrections.
- Discuss about the uncertainty of the data and information, their strengths and weaknesses – including the information that has been identified from other reliable sources.
- Quote various risk estimates, if necessary.
- Bring case studies and data to support your messages.
- If reliable authorities do not agree on the best action that can be taken, be ready to reveal the reason for these conflicting opinions, and why your agency has decided to take a certain kind of action instead over another.
- Be very careful especially when asked to speculate or to answer extreme questions or questions devoid of any foundation such as “what if” questions that describe the darkest kinds of scenarios.
- Avoid using absolute terms when speaking.
- Tell the truth.

5. Listen to the target audience

- do not make assumptions as to what the spectators, listeners know, think or want to be done about the risks.
- Time and resources permitting, before the interview, review any available data and information on the perception, attitude, opinions and beliefs that the public is likely to have on a certain even or risk. This kind of information is likely to be obtained by interviews, to have been facilitated by discussion groups, by expert information sessions, public hearings, meetings of the consultative groups, live phone calls and studies.
- Monitor and process the information available in the media, the internet included.
- Relate with the target audience and present information in such a way that would facilitate understanding help the people to take action accordingly.
- During interviews and press conferences, you must accept the fact that people’s emotions and fears are justified.
- Be empathetic.
- Tend towards the media channels that encourage listening, feedback, participation and dialogue.
- Admit that any alternative agenda as well as symbolical meanings, or broader social, cultural, economic or political considerations often make it more difficult to have an efficient communication with the media.
- Admit that although public health officials may use terms such as controlling the “morbidity” and “mortality” rates, for some public categories there are more important issues, such as equal access of people to medical care and resources.

6. Coordinate with other credible sources, collaborate and take action in partnership with them

- Develop coordination procedures for the activities of the spokespeople in as many agencies and organizations as possible.
- Establish links with the Internet sites of your partner organizations.
- Accept the fact that each organization has its own culture, which has an impact on the way and on the information that it is trying to communicate.
- As long as this is possible, work in partnership with other organizations to develop messages before any emergency situation occurs.
- Send the messages to the partner organizations and coordinate with them, before interviews or press conferences.
- Encourage your partner organizations to repeat the same key messages – if they are repeated by several voices help consolidate these messages in the eyes of the public.
- If there are several agencies involved, determine the procedures to be used for an early verification and approval of the information, if this is possible.
- You must tend to ensure consistency of the agencies' key messages – if there are any real differences in terms of opinions, reveal any conflicting points of view and explain you're your agency has opted for a certain kind of action over another .
- Develop a plan for any unforeseen situations, for those situations where partners fail to agree on consistent messages – be ready to make additional efforts to listen to their concerns, to understand their point of view, to negotiate any differences and to put pressure- where needed, is such an attitude is needed and adequate.
- Allocate efforts and resources to build bridges, partnerships and alliances with other organizations (including with any potential or well-known critics), before any crisis situation occurs.
- Consult with your internal and external partners in order to decide which organization should take control and answer the requests of the media and to document all the agreements which have been reached.
- Discuss in advance the areas of expertise of any organization on various specific topics and issues, to avoid those situations where one of the partners gets on the territory of another partner.
- Identify reliable and authoritative sources of information, which you can use to substantiate your messages in case there are any emergencies.
- Put together a plan for using this kind of information from other organizations, in case there are any emergencies.
- Develop contact lists with the experts who are able and willing to speak to the press about any topic that may be related to any emergencies.
- As part of your message, quote reliable and authoritative sources that believe the same thing that you do.
- Communicate with or via individuals or organizations, that the target audience deems to be credible and reliable.

7. Speak up and show compassion

- You should be aware that people need to know that you care, before they care about you know.
- Use a clear, non-specialized language.
- When using medical or technical terms, explain them to the people in as plain a language as possible.

- Use charts or visual-aid materials to clarify and consolidate your messages.
- Respect the unique information needs of the special and various public categories.
- Be honest in showing empathy, when answering questions about damages or casualties– accept the tragedy of this illness, injury or death.
- Customize the data on the risks by telling stories, reports and examples that make technical information more easily understood.
- Avoid distant, abstract language that is devoid of feelings when speaking about pain, death, injuries or illnesses.
- Accept and match (by what you say and do) the emotions that people show: anxiety, fear, concern, anger, outrage and impotence.
- Accept and match and distinctions that people deem to be important in assessing risks, such as perceived benefits, control, fairness, fear, nature of the risk (natural risks or risks generated by humans) and the effects on children.
- Be careful when using comparisons on the risks, just to create a context or a perspective. Do not suggest that one risk is similar to another – avoid comparisons that might minimize the issue or that might try to reduce the anxiety, or that seem to be attempting to answer whether a risk is acceptable or not.
- Make people feel that they are somehow in control, by identifying the specific protective action that can be taken.
- Identify any relevant information that is wrong and be aware that by repeating them there is too much attention being paid to this information.
- Admit that when one says „No comment” without giving any explanations or clarifications, he\she is deemed to be guilty of or hiding something– you should rather say „I would like to be able to answer that. However....”
- Be sensible when it comes to the local norms, such as those that have to do with speech and posture
- During an interview, always try to speak about action of the organizations that are under way, or about the kind of action that the public can take.

Contacte utile:

Institutie	Persoana de contact	Telefon, email, website
Ministerul Sanatatii Publice	Dr. Rodica Costinea director DSP	Tel: 021 3072 606, 3072 66 email: costinea@ms.ro www.ms.ro
Institutul de Boli Infectioase Prof. Dr. Matei Bals	Prof. Dr. Adrian Streinu Cercel Director	Tel: 021 318 6090 Email: strega@mb.roknet.ro
INCDCMI Cantacuzino	Conf. Dr. Radu Dorel Director Dr. Viorel Alexandrescu Sef Centru de Referinta pentru Gripa	Tel: 021 318 4410 Email: influenza@cantacuzino.ro www.cantacuzino.ro
Institutul de Sanatate Publica Bucuresti	Dr. Cristian Talea , Director Dr. Adriana Pistol Centru de Prevenire si Control Boli Transmisibile	Tel: 021 317 9702 Email: adip@ispb.ro www.ispb.ro
Institutul de Sanatate Publica Cluj	Prof. Dr. Ioan Stelian Bocsan - Director Dr. Geza Molnar – Sef Sectie Epidemiologie	Tel.: 0 264 594252 Fax: 0 264 593112 0 264 599891 E-mail: ispcj@ispcj.ro www.ispcj.ro
Institutul de Sanatate Publica Iasi	Prof. Dr. Luminita Smaranda Iancu - Director Dr. Angela Romaniuc – Sef Sectie Epidemiologie	Tel: 0 232 261 840, 0 232 410 399 / interior 106 email: ispiasi@yahoo.com www.pub-health-iasi.ro
Institutul de Sanatate Publica Timisoara	Conf. Dr. Emilian Popovici - Director Dr. Gratiana Chicin - Sef Sectie Epidemiologie	Tel: 0721261932 www.ispt.ro
Directia de Sanatate Publica Bucuresti	Dr. Florin Popovici	Email: flpopovici@yahoo.com

OMS - Organizatia Mondiala a Sanatatii
www.who.int/en

OMS/Europa - Organizatia Mondiala a Sanatatii - Biroul regional pentru Europa
www.who.dk

CDC ATLANTA - Centrul de Control al bolilor
www.cdc.gov

ECDC - Centrul European de Control al bolilor - www.ecdc.eu.int