

Philippines's Rizal Province free from avian flu

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The Rizal province in the Philippines regained its Avian Influenza-Free Status following the Department of Agriculture (DA) Memorandum by Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban.

The declaration is based on the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) norms.

This is after a minimum period of 28 days after a stamping-out policy has been completed, disinfection of the last affected establishment was carried out, and consequent surveillance demonstrated the absence of infection.

The DA Regional Field Office, DA Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), and the local government unit (LGU) jointly conducted disease control measures such as stamping out, cleaning and disinfection, and other quarantine activities to effectively manage the risk of further infection.

The Avian Influenza Protection (AIPP) with Rizal Province yielded negative test results. More than 40 days also elapsed since the end of the clean-up and disinfection operations and surveillance has been carried out in accordance with the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Code.

During the June and July month of last year, Rizal Province recorded confirmed cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 in the Municipality of Rodriguez affecting a commercial chicken layer farm, a backyard free-range chicken farm and a commercial contract grower farm.

To prevent the entry of HPAI virus and protect the local poultry industry, the DA also issued memorandum orders to temporarily ban the importation of domestic and wild birds and poultry products from countries with confirmed AI virus outbreaks.

The importation of domestic and wild birds and their products, including poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen, from Poland, Ireland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Chinese Taipei, Ecuador, Moldova, and Peru is banned until the order is revoked.

Undersecretary Panganiban also ordered for the immediate suspension of the processing, evaluation of the application, and issuance of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) import clearance to the above-stated commodities.

AI is a highly contagious viral disease that affects both domestic and wild birds. HPAI, on the other hand, can cause severe clinical signs and possible high mortality rates, especially in domestic poultry.