

Protecting Avian Influenza Responders Presentation Summaries

Monday, September 17, 2007

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Welcome

Juanda Rogers

Director, Employee Services Division, USDA-APHIS

- USDA-APHIS found that there is a need to protect those who protect us
- Focus of conference - High path avian influenza (HPAI)
- Attendees included health and safety specialists, policy makers, agencies and organizations involved in a first response

Joseph “Chip” Hughes

Program Director, NIEHS, Worker Education Training Program

- Provided background information on how the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Worker Education Training Program (WETP) came to deal with the Avian Influenza
- NIEHS WETP learned valuable lessons from the emergency response to 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina
- NIEHS WETP created Hurricane Katrina booklet *Protecting Yourself While Helping Others* and adjusted the booklet to create the Avian Influenza booklets *Protecting Yourself from Avian Influenza*

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Charles Lambert

Deputy Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA

- Provided background information on what the USDA is doing to prepare for an outbreak of Avian Influenza (including partnerships with US and International Agencies)
- First outbreak of AI was in Hong Kong in 1997 and since then 328 outbreaks of H5 and 200 deaths worldwide have been reported
- USDA is working with WHO, UN, International Animal Health Organizations, public and private organizations from Thailand, Indonesia, China to coordinate response

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

APHIS Veterinary Services Presentations

A historic perspective of APHIS’ response to Avian Influenza outbreaks including case

examples from 2004 to present will be presented. Information will be shared on the APHIS Veterinary Services Worker Health and Safety program in the eastern and western regional office and at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory, and information on the APHIS Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services worker health and safety services.

Dr. Patrice Klein

Senior Staff Veterinarian, USDA-APHIS

- Provided overview of HPAI (high path) and LPAI (low path) examining the differences in symptoms, physiology, transmission scenarios, potential to mutate and the responses to each
- AI has a high potential to mutate from low to high path and between animal types
- Transmission of low to high path typically occurs when backyard poultry come into contact at live-bird markets and commercial industry

Dr. Fraser Owens

Senior Staff Veterinarian, Area Emergency Coordinator, USDA-APHIS

- Provided an overview of changing considerations for worker safety and health and personal protective equipment (PPE) during an AI response
- APHIS began developing guidelines for worker protection in response to the 2003 re-emergence of H5N1 in Asia
- APHIS' plan has three objectives: workers must be trained to use PPE, must know what PPE to have, and that adequate supplies are available during outbreak

Post Presentation Questions

What documentation is needed for medically qualifying employees?

- Respiratory medical clearance under OSHA
- Consider employees health to wear TYBEK with respiratory equipment in houses (100+ degree heat)

Why do we have to worry about TYBEK and TYCHEM suits in a poultry house?

- CDC and WHO mandated these suits after H5N1 outbreak
- Suits used to reduce possibility of skin contact with infectious chemicals, respiratory, ingestion, and breaks in skin

Why is there no mention of anti-viral prophylactic, seasonal influenza vaccine in the "Protecting Yourself from Avian Influenza"?

- Adopted the CDC recommendation about annual influenza shot

Is this an algorithm for level of protection, or is this a plan for the future?

- There is no matrix, it is talking to experienced individuals, and science with respirators.

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Various APHIS Agencies Presentations

Insight into USDA-APHIS' perspective as lead coordinating agency to an avian outbreak will be shared as well as a synopsis of their plan with expected sequence of events. Other topics covered will include: how to prepare participating agencies from training to medical monitoring, what is in place currently to accomplish this, and an example of an AI site specific HASP.

Peter Petch

Industrial Hygienist, USDA-APHIS

- Provided background and overview of APHIS employees training and systems created to deal with emergency response
- Overview of APHIS employee training, AgERT, HAZWOPER
- Overview of how the National Response Plan became the National Response Framework

Dr. Jonathan Zack

Director of Incident and Preparedness, USDA-APHIS

- Provided background information on APHIS and its role in emergency response incident and preparedness
- Provided an overview on APHIS under USDA and the hierarchy of services
- Discussed Trans-boundary diseases

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch Speaker

Cindy Smith

Administrator, USDA-APHIS

- Presented an overview of steps APHIS is taking to prepare for AI and protect workers
- APHIS believes that a proactive collaborative approach is the best way to deal with Avian Influenza

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Avian Influenza Game Exercise

The table-top board game exercise allowed participants to choose a variety of limited resources to deploy during an avian influenza outbreak. The game moves the players through challenges they identify as the events unfold. The players gain enhanced awareness of the particular health and safety issues they would encounter from the perspective of the role they would likely play during an outbreak.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Game Report Back

Group One

- Frustration waiting for and changing resources
- Commercial assets were not actively engaged in the game – in the real world they are there
- Faster depopulation methods are needed
- Minimum PPE standards are not enough – need to push beyond it

Group Two

- Safety and Health – the JSA and site analysis are critical to prevention
- Daily Safety Briefs – hold supervisors accountable instead of safety officers
- Vaccine Team – never used it because movement control worked better
- Throwing chickens at each other is a management issue, not safety issue

Group Three

- Difference between vaccination in public health and animal
- Question – how to deal with people that are injured in a quarantine environment?
- Excellent discussion on hydration policy
- Did not get a chance to talk about mental health issues in response

Group Four

- Focus on your specialty, not other jobs
- Learn more beyond your own perspective
- Try to understand the human factors dealing with safety (i.e. someone can not be in a hot suit all day), add it into your plan
- Outreach and communications team – let the public know ahead of time if they are being affected
- Safety objectives should be a high priority

Group Five

- Thought that movement control was too limited, need to build relationships with law enforcement
- Need to have decontamination unit set up already to get help quickly and not spread disease
- Various safety and health issues that come up can be classified as different levels of severity

Group Six

- Problem was understanding the variables, too many of them
- Problem not getting a publicity person available fast enough
- Team put in dollars, three in a row, and it still wasn't enough
- In reality it takes 14 days for lab results to come back

Group Seven

- Utilize resource management earlier
- Human involvement at the table – much more lively
- Keeping focused on planning for the next day
- Discussion on tribal law – not that easy to go and depopulate, need to jump through hoops

Group Eight

- Spent time debating real world situations instead of game situations
- Safety needs to be more proactive, not a necessary evil
- Training needs to be done in advance, take lessons from fire fighters