

NEWSLETTER



14 March 2024

AVIAN INFLUENZA

South Africa faced several outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza that is threatening neighbouring countries and affecting bilateral avian trade within the southern African region. The disease has affected several provinces thus threatening the livelihoods and health of both poultry farmers and consumers through loss of income from trade embargoes, production losses and infection of the labour force. The H5N1 and H7N6 are highly pathogenic strains that have ravaged the country to the extent that shortages of poultry products, particularly eggs, caused escalation of prices beyond the financial means of many. The Republic has been severely affected by these outbreak events, despite the existing broad knowledge base and technical expertise on avian influenza diagnostics. The experts on the webinar presented on various topics where Prof Celia Abolnik emphasized that, knowledge on H5N1 and H7N6 sequential mutation is key to unlocking all the challenges of transmission dynamics. Only when a viruses behaviour, composition, genetic diversity, and host adaptation are fully known can one effectively combat it.

Dr Grietjie de Klerk, shared insights about issues of risks posed by outbreaks such as food security, migratory pathways, impact on the import bill of fertilized eggs on exports to SADC countries. Furthermore, Prof Folorunso Fasina emphasized on the virus being a moving target calling for vigilance enhanced capacities and international cooperations.

Thus, recommendations based on best practices from other developing countries experiences on control and prevention measures will be a great resource.

Lastly, Dr Moetapele Letshwenyo's, reminder in light of Resolution Number 28, which addresses the

threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza worldwide, it is critical to share information, isolates, and epidemiological data. It is also important to note the advantages of following international standards for avian influenza in the relevant chapters pertaining to vaccination, trade, and disease control. Elaboration on recent

“Threat of emerging H5N1 and H7N6 Avian Influenza viruses to regional poultry market: global overview and sustainable control measure applicable to southern Africa”



developments on the disease particularly on identifying avian influenza as a one health concept is vital for the society.

This webinar served as a platform to raise awareness, foster collaboration, and equip participants with the tools to combat this threat in developing economies. Let's use the knowledge gained today to protect our regional poultry market and the global community.

In conclusion, we at SASVEPM, under the leadership of Dr Mohamed Sirdar, appreciate the speakers dedication and expertise in sharing their knowledge. We would also like to thank our secretary for her consistent efforts as well as SAVETCON for hosting the webinar, where 604 participants registered and attended from 28 countries over 5 continents.



2 CPD points



Prof FO Fasina
FAO



Prof C Abolnik
UP



Dr G de Klerk
DALRRD



Dr M Letshwenyo
WOAH

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