

Five representatives and Livestock & Fisheries Minister discuss bird flu outbreak and compensation

NAY PYI TAW, 28 March-At today Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's session, five representatives discussed the proposal of Dr Aye Maung from Rakhine State Constituency No (1) to "give compensation or provide cash assistance for regeneration of works to national entrepreneur breeders in case of culling of poultry due to bird flu outbreak".

U Khin Maung Aye of Sagaing Region Constituency No (7) said that there are many zootomists like anthrax, rabies, tapeworm besides H5N1. There are similar cases in marine breeding industry. And giving compensation whenever there is disease outbreak is not an appropriate solution, There are also outbreaks due to one's negligence and failure to take prevention measures.

When the epidemic began to break out, the neighbouring country observed the disease by giving compensations as a temporary solution to collect information about the pandemic disease and control it.

However, they failed to fully protect from the disease.

Myanmar saw four flu outbreaks from 2006 to 2010. As livestock breeding organizations have been set up in the country, breeders can exchange information quickly and take preventive measures in time. Giving compensation is unrealistic solution to the problem and biosecurity and disease control should be prioritized in solving the problem.

For food safety, farms are to be provided with reliable health care to ensure bio-security. Measures to be taken for that are already issued. Breeders are to cooperate with Department, and federation to gain knowledge about the disease. Bird density should be restricted in the beginning of cold season when birds come to Myanmar for hibernation.

If breeders are suspicious the poultry infected with disease, they are to report to the nearest vets and Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Departments and follow their instructions to control the disease.

Regarding bio-security, ASEAN nations have discussed and agreed common bio-security management standards scheme to harmonize the animal (both terrestrial and aquatic animals) health control for food safety, so breeders are to realize it.

H5N1 disease is a problem which takes time to get stamped out and thus Livestock Breeding Federation in coordination with NGOs should provide cash assistance to the breeders other than giving compensation. Another mean is to provide assistance by setting up a fund by the private sector and the public and breeders themselves should exerted efforts to carry out breeding tasks. So, he disagree the proposal of Dr Aye Maung, said U Khin Maung Aye.

U Maung Maung Soe of Inga Constituency said that Dr Aye Maung proposed measures to be taken by the government; that is to systematically cull poultry in the area that requires to be under control, and to launch massive educative campaigns that help public understand and accept the procedures of the disease control.

Bird Flu Control Committees are formed in townships, district, states and regions with members of Myanmar Police Forces, township Development Affairs Committee, township Health Department, Livestock Breeding Federation and Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

In every township, arrangements have been made to control the disease and to take actions in case of bird flu outbreak.

Township bird flu control committees are formed with three teams-surveillance team, culling team and disinfectant team. Culling team assumes responsibility of culling poultry one-mile radius of the infected layer farm.

One kilogram of chicken manure can infect one million of chickens rapidly and that insecticide are sprayed in the area systematically. Complete plans have been prepared for emergency control of bird flu in line with Contingency Plan for H.P.A.I Control. Every township now can respond quickly to the disease as swift communication network between sub-village and headquarters and local authorities at different level has been set up.

There will be no unavoidable problems between the breeders and authorities concerned because of educative talks, campaigns to promote bio-security, and similar exercise did by breeders, and consumers. Sample tissues are taken from the poultry died of suspected flu, and then are tested with rapid test kit for influenza Type A and then are quickly sent to diagnostic labs in Yangon and Mandalay to confirm the disease.

As soon as the diagnosis has come out, control zones are designated and sales of chicken and related products are banned in order not to spread of disease and infection to the people.

The proposal suggested that the government should give compensation or provide cash assistance to national entrepreneur breeders. Its means while the breeder himself enjoys the profit of his business, the government has to compensate him when he suffers losses due to various reasons. At present, the State neither can give compensation nor provide cash assistance whenever its private industries suffer losses for various reasons.

Some countries that gave compensation first did not give later. Breeders can have insurance against zootomists from Myanma Insurance. So, in stead of asking the State to compensate, breeders, sellers and consumers are to realize bio-security measures seriously so that there will no longer be problem.

The total number of poultry culled in the flu outbreaks since 3 March, 2006 is frighteningly high. 28 townships saw five bird flu outbreaks and suffered losses of 862,000 poultry amounting for K 3878 million. It is also the losses of private sector including rural areas where poultry are breed on manageable scale.

It is learnt that in spite of such heavy losses, only a few compensation, financial aid and loans were provided to the breeders who suffered losses, so regeneration works were less effective and consequently, there were some problems as the public refused to cooperate with authorities concerned.

It is learnt that neighbouring nations gave compensation or special loans and supervised regeneration works and in Korea and Australia, breeders got full compensation.

Poultry breeding is vulnerable to climate change and natural disaster. If there is loss, it is the total loss and there is no recovery. So, it is risky.

Regarding profit of poultry breeders, it can be said the work is profitable. In addition to personal profit of breeders, the work supplies food to the people daily, controlling prices of meat and fish and generating jobs.

So The State requires to lay down insurance programmes to protect livestock breeding industry. Article 356 in Chapter (8) of the constitution states that the Union shall protect according to law moveable and immovable properties of every citizen that are lawfully acquired.

Dr Aye Maung's suggestions for actions against bird flu are practical, and realistic and thus seconded the proposal said U Maung Maung Soe.

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U Kyi Myint of Latha Constituency said that in market economy, each individual breeder has chosen his best occupation based on his qualification without the command of anyone else and sells eggs, fowl, and duck with the highest prices offered. If there are many buyers or there is lesser commodity, he would either store his products or simply raise the price. It is the fact that makes the interests of private and the public different.

The GDP and revenue ratio is only three per cent and the Government has to pay large amount for bridge and road construction and electricity supply from its pocket due to small amount of regional revenue. It can be learnt in the answers of respective ministers to queries raised in the first regular sessions of Hluttaws. Inflation is the root-cause of it. Large revenue can prevent from inflation. Inflation can be prevented if expenditure is leveled with revenue. It should be ended that people are bearing tax burden added to commodity prices.

Businessmen including poultry breeders are already taking necessary actions on their own accord.

Businessmen can practice insurance system for agriculture, livestock breeding and trade activities. It is profitable to insure for it can increase loanable fund to other industries, benefiting the both sides.

Each individual needs not to create burden to the nation even if they do nothing for the interest of the nation.

Since 1998 to date, the State has reduced taxes and created environment for greater investment of individual, with a view to economic growth through increased per capita income.

Businessmen are to work for increase of spillover effect to the society. The proposal of Dr Aye Maung does not fit the market economic system of multi-party democracy system and thus he raised objection to the proposal.

U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khaing Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency said that the proposal concerns the interests of the entire nation, calling for national-level programmes.

It is needed to build livestock industry systematically.

As 60 per cent of breeders in Myanmar are running small-scale farm, with less than 10,000 poultry and thus have difficulty in regenerating their business.

He said he believed in stead of the State giving compensation, it should issue laws to set up anti-bird flu associations under the supervision of the State and seconded Dr Aye Maung's proposal.

In his response, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Maung Maung Thein said that the whole meat and fish sector has been privatized and Myanmar Fisheries federation and Livestock Breeding Federation have been set up as national political forces for private entrepreneurs.

Today, zootomists are increasing gradually, posing changeless to humans. The ministry, holding concept that the role of vets is becoming more important gradually, is taking necessary actions.

Myanmar saw four bird flu outbreaks from 2006 to 2010 with outbreaks in Rakhine State in February, in Sagaing in March in 2011. In the first outbreak in 545 farms in Sagaing and Mandalay regions, 660,000 chickens and quails, in the second outbreak in Yangon, Bago regions and Mon State in 76 farms, 110,000, in the second outbreak in Shan State (East) 30000, in the fourth outbreak in Yangon and Sagaing regions in 31 farms, 16000, in the fifth outbreak in Rakhine State and Sagaing region in 151 farms, 97000 were killed, altogether 913000 chickens and quails were killed in 803 farms in 31 townships in five flu outbreaks.

When the bird flu occurred for the first time in 2006, assistance was rendered by Thailand, FAO, OIE, WHO and JICA which has experience in dealings the case.

At first, there were some misunderstandings between breeders and authorities concerned, but later they all realized the situation had enabled authorities concerned to control the farm.

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary team had to clear the mess. They did it although the job was risky and not a pleasant one.

In the second time in 2007, Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department assumed responsibility to examine the cases to ensure there is no panic among the public, loss to the breeders, delay in commodity flow and harm to the consumers, and issued health certificates.

When H5N1 virus outbreak in 2006 was examined, it was found to be identical to that of Hubei Region, Yunnan Province of China. The virus of the second outbreak in 2007 is identical to Fujian in Fuzhou Province of China. So, it can be said that the virus did not spread from Sagaing and Mandalay to Yangon. So, the ministry educate people to pay attention to bio-security.

As the epidemic can spread rapidly with high mortality rate and can also infect to humans, it is required to control effectively and quickly. If people are infected with the virus, it is impossible to kill them and so poultry were killed for the health of the people. The ministry is taking measures in accord with the norms of OIE to control the disease.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza was listed under listed transmitted diseases infected to animals with notification No (09/2004) dated 6 April, 2004 in accord with Veterinary and Development Law (1993) Articles 14 and 33. Regarding prevention of the listed diseases, the ministry issued notification No (49/99) dated 5 August, 1999.

Avian flu emergency preparedness project (February, 2009) have been drafted under article 15 of the above-mentioned law. Flu control procedures are carried out in accord with the project.

A personnel who was assigned by local authority chaired bird flu prevention committees at township, district, Region and State level. Representatives from Myanmar Police Force, Development Affairs Committee, Health Department, Livestock and Breeding Federation and related organizations are members of the committee to which secretary is assigned by Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Flu surveillance is carried out when birds are found to die of suspected flu. If avian flu case is suspected, laboratory samples were tested with Rapid Test Kit for Influenza Type A and sent to Mandalay or Yangon Diagnosis Laboratory.

Veterinary Diagnosis Laboratory underwent tests using Rapid Test Kit for Influenza Type A, RT-PCT & Real Time PCR and Virus isolation in embryonated chicken eggs methods to release confirmation of avian flu case. The Director-General submits lab result to the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries if the tests indicate bird flu and confirms the case. The press release is sent to OIE and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as well as to public via dailies, televisions and radios.

To control spreading of the virus and prevent transmission to persons, zone is designated and transfer of chicken and related produce is restricted under avian flu prevention ways.

Transfer and trading of chicken and related produce, farm equipment and vehicles are limited, permitted and restricted in infected area, restricted area and control area.

Cleaning and disinfection are carried out in farms during flu control period. Flu surveillance and public awareness measures were taken in nearby areas of infected farm.

The director-general, heads of township/district/ Region/State Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department report progress constantly to local authority and the ministry.

If no more flu case is reported in the area from the date of last outbreak to 21-day flu control period, the restrictions are withdrawn.

Director-General,s Office of the department carries on works to classify the area as disease free area within 90 days from withdrawal.

Considerable cleaning, spraying pesticide and disease surveillance works are completed under Contingency Plan for HPAI control during 90 days from withdrawal. Breeding is allowed only after post-outbreak surveillance shows no more flu cases.

Averting public panic, breeders' loss and disrupted commodity flow is considering points in disease control measures.

Transmission of flu to officials, volunteers and public is cautiously controlled in disease control measures.

The ministry is joining hands with international organizations - FAO, OIE, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), Care Myanmar, USAID - in taking bird flu control measures since 2006. With the cooperation with FAO in implementing eight plans for avian flu control, laboratory of Yangon Zoological Garden is upgraded to Biosafety level II (BSL II), contributing to drafting contingency plan.

Commercial breeding farms in 11 Regions/States, 28 districts and 54 townships with mass breeding coverage and trading of chicken, duck and related products are recorded. A total of 16200 plasmas and samples for tracking flu have been sent to laboratory. Flu awareness trainings were disseminated to breeders in November and December in 2009 and January in 2010. Starting in June of 2010, bird flu surveillance tasks, upgrading laboratories, public awareness measures, improving bio-safety of breeding farms, bird flu surveillance in regions of birds hibernated, compiling trade reports of chicken, duck, pigs and related produce in markets, drawing trade amount and price map and tracking entrance of bird flu were carried out in 78 townships.

Breeding farms recording, GPS recording and inspecting bio security were being carried out.

Being bird flu resistance makes disruptions in diagnosis.

Countries exercising vaccination practices do not achieve absolute success yet. Vaccination is prohibited by the government in some countries. Myanmar is adopting Stamping out Policy after considering discussions in international meetings and advices of experts at home and abroad.

United Nations Bird Flu and Influenza A/H1N1 Senior Coordinator Dr David Nabarro recognized Myanmar's successful control of disease transmission and transmission to public in cooperation with related departments and organizations. Two scholars of World Bank leveled Myanmar's disease control when they informed Resident Representative of Myanmar as "one of most successful bird flu and Influenza A/H1N1 control projects in East Asia and Pacific region with aid of World Bank" after concluding their field trip to Myanmar.

Local authority, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs, FAO and Myanmar Fisheries Federation equipped breeders in flu affected Mandalay, Sagaing, Yangon and Bago Regions and Mon State and Shan State (East) with GSM phones, medicines and chicks. They were recommended to receive loans from Myanmar Breeding and Fisheries Development Bank.

Some ASEAN countries provide compensation/ financial aid ranging from 15 to 60 per cent of current price, but some do not due to economic status.

With the approval of management committee meeting of the ministry held on 10 September, 2009, Myanmar Breeding and Fisheries Development Bank invested K 25 m seed fund.

Broiler Breeders and Traders Association (Yangon), established 12 December, 2007, raised its fund to K 40 m and is providing assistance for training breeders, spraying pesticide in markets, extended construction of shops and repair of shops.

FAO Compensation Consultant Dr Rose Azuba Musoke visited Myanmar from 24 January to 20 February in 2008. She submitted report on bird flu outbreak, control and providing compensation and relief, revealing the international community has accepted the concept of providing compensation/relief to inform the outbreak by breeders with the knowledge of stamping out; the compensation/relief system can not be endured solely by the government but by private-public partnership fund. He suggested the cooperation of MFF, BBTA (Yangon) and the ministry has prospects of wider development in bird flu control.

From 2003 to 2011 March, 63 countries were infected by bird flu. Avian flu broke out in Myanmar and other eight nations from January to March in 2011. From 2003 to 2011 March, 311 persons - 142 in Indonesia, 59 in Vietnam, 17 in Thailand, 11 in Cambodia and two in Lao- died of bird flu out of infected 528. As the disease control tasks were carried under international norms in Myanmar, only a girl in Kengtung of Shan State (East) was infected by avian flu and there was no death. To curb breeding in wards, breeding zones had been established.

Establishment of private-public partnership fund, subcommittees, drafting of notifications, directives and regulations and disbursing loans will continue.

Areas which needs disease control had been designated under OIE Protocol, bird flu control procedures had been disseminated through media. The State will not be able to provide compensation now. Myanma Insurance provides insurance related to animals.

Appropriate assistance had been provided to breeding business and recovery works and will be through Livestock and Breeding Federation. Regarding bank loan, Myanma Breeding and Fishery Development Bank will disburse loan in accord with banking procedures. As the complete clarification on bird flu was presented, it will not be needed to continue dealing with the proposal.

The speaker asked the will of Dr Aye Maung of Rakhine State Constituency-1, resource person, who requested the withdrawal of proposal and keeping it in record of the hluttaw.

The Hluttaw approved the recording of Dr Aye Maung's proposal to be dealt with by next government and that the Hluttaw need not continue reacting the proposal with the volition of resource person.