

Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) in the Dominican Republic

According to a communiqué dated 21 December 2007 from the Secretary of Public Health and Social Assistance (*Secretaría de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social* / [SESPAS](#)) of the Dominican Republic to the World Organization of Animal Health ([OIE](#)) and to the [PAHO/WHO](#) Office in that country, the Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) virus H5N2 has been detected in poultry in Santo Domingo (the capital city) and in La Otra Banda (in the province of La Altagracia). This virus is different from the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus responsible for the highly fatal outbreaks in birds and associated human cases.



The first cases were discovered on 10 December 2007 when poultry producers requested official permission to export birds. No bird deaths were reported. The Central Veterinary Laboratory (*Laboratorio Veterinario Central* / Lavecen) diagnosed the H5N2 virus, which was confirmed on 21 December 2007 at the OIE Reference Laboratory (located at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories / [NVSL](#), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service / [APHIS](#), United States Department of Agriculture / [USDA](#), in Ames, Iowa, USA).

The Dominican authorities immediately began investigating the outbreak and put into motion the measures laid out in their Emergency Response Plan, in particular quarantine, culling of affected birds, and controlling any movement of said birds.

To date, there have been no human cases reported that are associated with these types of influenza in animals. However, considering that on rare occasions in the past this type of virus has crossed the barrier between species to infect humans, the Secretary of Public Health and Social Assistance will be receiving technical cooperation from PAHO experts in surveillance and containment of both seasonal and pandemic influenza, with the goal of strengthening national capacities for detecting and responding to influenza outbreaks.

The Secretary of Public Health and Social Assistance of the Dominican Republic has made a statement to the country's population that they may continue to consume chicken without any danger of becoming ill, since any potentially affected birds have been eliminated. He also reported that the remaining birds from the affected areas are in quarantine so as to avoid any mutations and disease spread.

Source: Information received by PAHO from the Secretary of Public Health and Social Assistance ([SESPAS](#)) of the Dominican Republic.