# Dcfrn-~1Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

# Package 79, Script 2

November 2006

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Avian Influenza Spots

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**Notes to Broadcaster**

In countries around the world, a highly contagious disease called avian influenza, also known as bird flu, has resulted in the death of millions of farm and wild birds, including chickens, ducks, turkeys, and guinea fowl. Either the disease has killed the birds outright, or birds have been killed in an effort to stop the further spread of the infection. This has had a devastating effect on farming families who rely on poultry for income and for food. Avian influenza can in some cases be spread to humans. Though this occurrence is fairly unlikely, it is estimated that, as of October 2006, almost 150 people have died from the human form of avian influenza. Thus, it is important not only to take precautions to keep poultry safe, but to keep oneself and one’s family safe.

The theme and message of the following spots is that, for both families and communities, prevention is the best defence against avian influenza. The spots also highlight the fact that prevention is easily accomplished by practicing good hygiene around poultry and poultry products, and by using reliable methods to stop the spread of the disease.

**Spot #1: What is Avian Flu?**

Avian influenza, also known as bird flu, has spread to many countries. Bird flu is a contagious infection which affects farm birds, including chickens, ducks, turkeys, and guinea fowl, as well as pet birds and wild birds. The disease starts with sick wild or tame birds, and then spreads to other animals and people through direct contact with the droppings, mucus, blood, or feathers of infected birds. Human infections start just like the flu, with fever, headache, and vomiting, but can quickly become fatal. In fact, the disease kills half of the people who are infected. But with a few simple precautions, such as practicing good hygiene when handling poultry or poultry products, and reporting sick or dead birds, we can stop this disease from spreading. Contact your local or national health or agricultural authorities for more information on what you can do to stop avian flu.

**Spot #2: Avian Influenza is a Global Problem**

Do you own chickens, ducks, or other food-producing birds? If so, you have likely heard of avian influenza, also called bird flu. Bird flu is a serious disease that strikes tame and wild birds. All over the world, farmers are taking action to stop its spread by paying close attention to the health of their flocks and by following simple rules that protect their farms and families. For example, always try to keep your poultry separated from wild birds or birds that roam free to avoid contamination. Also, be sure to report any sick or dead poultry to the authorities immediately. There are many other ways to protect your family, your community, and your livelihood from bird flu. Contact your local or national health or agricultural authorities for more information on what you can do to stop this disease.

**Spot #3: Prevent the spread of Avian Flu**

**Characters:**

Host

Two farmers

**Host**: Do you own chicken, ducks, or other food-producing birds? A serious disease called avian influenza or bird flu is killing poultry all over the world. Bird flu spreads in the droppings, mucus, blood, or feathers of infected birds. To reduce the spread of this disease and to protect your family and your community, you must pay close attention to everyone who enters or leaves your farm.

**Person #1**: [Name of *person #2*], did I tell you that [*insert male name*] is coming to visit?

**Person #2**: Wait, I remember hearing that some farms in his village have bird flu!

**Person #1**: What does that matter? He is not sick!

**Person #2:** No, but it is a bad idea for him to visit. The soil in his village could be contaminated. If he comes to our farm he could infect our entire flock. Just a small amount of bird droppings on his shoes could spread bird flu to our farm and kill all of our chickens. (*Short pause*) Could he stay at our uncle’s house while he is here? Uncle doesn’t have any poultry.

**Person # 1:** Yes, I’m sure that would be fine. Can we go to visit him there?

**Person #2:** Yes, of course! It would be great to see him again.

**Spot #4: Protecting yourself from Avian Flu**

If you are worried that you or your family could get sick from avian flu, you should know that there are many ways to prevent the disease, and that the best solution is to use as many preventative methods as possible. Listen to this:

* Always practice good hygiene by washing your hands immediately before and after handling raw poultry meat or eggs.
* Be sure to cook meat and eggs all the way through to kill any disease that may be present. Do not eat raw poultry products.
* Thoroughly clean utensils that have come in contact with raw poultry meat, including knives, cutting boards, and counter tops.
* Do not slaughter sick birds for food or prepare any birds that have died from being sick.

Remember that it is direct contact with the droppings, blood, mucus or feathers of infected birds that can cause human infections. Follow these simple precautions and you will help protect your family and your community from bird flu.

**Spot #5: Recognizing the symptoms of bird flu**

Do you own chickens, ducks, or other birds? Recent outbreaks of bird flu in Asia, Europe and Africa have destroyed the flocks of many farmers. It is very important to recognize the many symptoms and prevent the spread of this disease. Be careful to watch your birds for any signs of:

* Coughing or sneezing
* Fluid coming from the eyes and nose
* Swollen and blue comb or legs streaked with red
* Loss of appetite or depression, or
* Diarrhoea

Keep a close watch for any sick animals. If you think that a bird is infected with bird flu, please isolate it and report the incident immediately to your local health or agricultural authorities.

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Contributed by: Peter Sykanda, MSc Candidate, Rural Extension Studies, University of Guelph, Canada.

Reviewed by: Margie Taylor, Communications Director, Chicken Farmers of Ontario.

**Information sources**

USAID Avian Influenza Program

http://www.grade-eh.com/clipart/myflags/flagcanada50x25.gifProgram undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)