

Bird flu: India declares itself free from Bird Flu

NEW DELHI: India has declared itself free from [Bird Flu](#) (highly pathogenic [Avian Influenza](#) - H5N1 and H5N8) and notified it to the [World Organisation for Animal Health](#). The move will help it resume export of poultry products to the countries which had banned trade in such items early this year.

India had reported outbreaks of Avian Influenza at various epicentres in Delhi, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh), Rajpura (Punjab), Hissar (Haryana), Bellary (Karnataka), Allappuzha and Kottayam (Kerala), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Daman (Daman) and Khordha and Angul in Odisha during October 2016 to February 2017.

"India has declared itself free from Avian Influenza (H5N8 and H5N1) from June 6, 2017 and notified the same to the World Organisation for Animal Health", said the Union agriculture ministry in a statement on Thursday.

The countries which banned Indian poultry products, include [United Arab Emirates](#) (UAE) and Hong Kong.

The ministry said that all the outbreaks of Avian Influenza were notified to the world body and the control and containment operations were carried out as per the action plan on preparedness, control and containment.

"Surveillance was carried out throughout the country and around the areas of the outbreaks since completion of the operation (including culling, disinfection and clean-up). Surveillance in the states showed no evidence of presence of Avian Influenza virus", said the ministry while justifying its action.

The World Organisation for Animal Health is recognised as a reference body by the [World Trade Organization](#). It has 181 countries as its members. This global body keeps tab on animal health issues and advises countries on best practices to be followed during such outbreaks.

This organisation also supports countries to help them control animal diseases that cause livestock losses and pose a risk to public health. Under its norms, ban can be lifted after 90 days of surveillance.

Though many West Asian countries have already lifted the ban to import from India, the remaining ones are expected to open their markets after the latest notification to the world body.

India is, at present, the world's fifth largest egg producer and the 18th largest producer of broilers. In terms of export from India, poultry products recorded 18% growth during the 2015-16 financial year over the same period of 2014-15.

The country had exported over 6,59,304 metric tonne of poultry products worth Rs 768.72 crore during 2015-16. The major importing countries of these products were Oman, USA, Saudi Arabia, Japan, UAE and Germany.

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