

# Poultryhealth BYTES

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## Avian influenza X

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## Preventive vaccination

In countries that have experienced any outbreaks of avian influenza there has been a need to develop long term strategies that minimise the need for culling. This has happened in countries such as Pakistan for H7N3, Italy for H7N1, Mexico for H5N2 and China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Indonesia for H5N1.

Large scale vaccination requires adequate financial funding and good planning and management of technical and operational aspects of the vaccination strategy.

## The viability of vaccination

Current vaccines give good protection to chickens and ducks but there is an on-going need to look out for new strains emerging and for improving vaccine formulation.

For zoonotic strains, such as H5N1 and H7N9, human health considerations come to the fore when deciding the merits of preventive vaccination in a particular situation.

Vaccination gives real financial benefits to farmers as it minimises disease spread and bird losses.

For a country where the export trade in poultry products is important, the preferred approach to an outbreak of influenza is to stamp it out. This approach has been successful in Thailand.

If a vaccination approach to influenza control is to be adopted there must be adequate funding available as continuity is essential. In large scale poultry operations the costs are divided into 75-85% for vaccines and 25-15% for labour and other costs, including monitoring. For a backyard flock situation these figures can be reversed.

## Post outbreak rehabilitation

Two considerations have to be sourcing of stock and finance. The former becomes a real issue if many breeder farms have been culled.

Obviously one needs to review the farm's biosecurity before restocking. If location presents a real risk of infection, the option of using the buildings for another purpose is worthy of consideration. In a free range scenario, such as ducks in Asia, housing of the ducks might be necessary.

Consolidation of an industry into fewer hands tends to minimise bird movements and eliminate live bird sales as well as simplify key tasks such as vaccination.

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