

## AVIAN INFLUENZA

On February 19, 2004, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of a mildly pathogenic form of avian influenza in the Fraser Valley of southern British Columbia. On March 9, CFIA confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The virus found in British Columbia was not the same as the virus that exists in Asia. Most trading partners imposed trade measures: in some cases against British Columbia only; in other cases against all of Canada.

On March 11, Canada established a control area in the Fraser Valley to prevent the spread of avian influenza. The control area encompassed a five-kilometre high-risk area and a 10-kilometre surveillance region surrounding the farms where the virus was found. The movement of any kind of bird, any product or by-products of a bird, and anything that had been exposed to a bird into, out of or within the control area was restricted. A strict program of surveillance led to the detection of infection in a total of 42 commercial and 11 backyard premises. The depopulation of all infected flocks was completed on May 20. On July 19, Canada informed the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) that the virus had been successfully eradicated in accordance with OIE standards. On August 18, the regulation that had established the control area was rescinded, allowing the domestic movement of poultry and poultry products to resume. On November 23, Canada informed the OIE that, as of November 20, six months had passed since the detection and slaughter of the last affected flock, that during this period the CFIA had not detected any further activity of the HPAI virus, and that, as a result, Canada had met the prescribed OIE guidelines to be recognized as a country free of HPAI.

Canada was proactive throughout the avian influenza outbreak and its aftermath; it kept its trading partners fully informed of developments, provided them with all the scientific information requested and responded to trade measures imposed by trading partners. Initially, Canada's approach was to limit the trade impact by requesting our trading partners to regionalize their measures to the B.C. Fraser Valley control area. As a result, a number of trading partners did limit their measures to British Columbia or to the B.C. Fraser Valley control area. Following the resumption of domestic movement of poultry and poultry products on August 18, Canada asked its trading partners to remove all remaining measures against Canadian products. Canada is calling upon all trading partners that have not already done so to remove their remaining measures on grounds that Canada has met all of the OIE requirements to be recognized as free of HPAI. (See individual market reports for details on how avian influenza trade issues have been dealt with in individual markets.)

Canada also updated the Committee on developments relating to avian influenza in Canada at the March, June and October meetings. As with BSE, Canada provided information on its regulatory response and called upon trading partners to resume trade with Canada on scientific grounds. It also met bilaterally with some trading partners (e.g. South Africa and Japan) to press for science-based removal of their avian influenza-related restrictions on imports from Canada.

The Committee continues to be widely used by WTO members, including developing country members, as a forum for raising bilateral issues.

During the year, Canada raised the issue of Venezuela's import permit requirements for potatoes and meat, and it intervened in support of other members regarding issues such as the EU's directive on wood packaging material, the EU's animal by-product requirements, Korea's residue level testing requirements and India's new phytosanitary import requirements. The Committee is also used by members as a forum for providing updates on issues of interest to other trading partners (as Canada did on BSE and avian influenza). Issues and concerns relating to implementation of the international standard developed on wood packaging material were raised by many members at each Committee meeting.