FAO has placed the protection of biosecurity high on its agenda for coming years with the launching 12 October of its Crisis Management Centre (CMC), a rapid response facility designed to boost and expand its already existing capacity to handle transboundary animal diseases such as avian influenza in association with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Officially inaugurated by FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf in the presence of OIE Director-General Bernard Vallat, the new centre is equipped with the latest communications technology and a core staff of scientists and emergency experts is already on constant standby to move into action the moment an animal disease or other threat to the world’s food chain is reported.

The CMC is the world’s frontline facility for responding immediately to high risk events or the occurrence of transboundary diseases or pests, and it works in close cooperation with the appropriate ministries of the countries concerned and other international or regional organisations.

In its initial stages, the CMC will focus on the global highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) emergency, working with OIE to stamp out outbreaks of the disease that would otherwise run the risk of spreading out of control.

In the fight against avian influenza, the centre will increase the quick reaction capacity of the already existing Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), headed by FAO’s Chief Veterinary Officer. ECTAD will continue to act as FAO’s component of the global U.N. strategy to prevent and control the disease.

continued on Page 2
In addition, the centre will draw on the expertise of the joint FAO/OIE/WHO early warning facility – the Global Early Warning and Response System (GLEWS) – to obtain the critical advance data that is necessary to identify hotspots and draw up plans and strategies to halt HPAI in its tracks.

Addressing guests at the launching ceremony in Rome, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said "the CMC represents a significant leap forward in FAO’s ability to help member nations prevent and cope with disease outbreaks." "Three years into the avian influenza crisis, FAO and the international community can draw some satisfaction, and some relief, in the progress made to contain a most deadly menace to the health of animals and humans across the globe..” But, Diouf warned, “despite the encouraging and very real progress made, it does not mean we can lower our guard. Only when H5N1 has been totally eradicated will the Sword of Damocles, or more pessimistically the time-bomb, of a human pandemic be removed.”

The new centre is the outcome of the lessons FAO and OIE have learned in the three years they have been leading the international fight against avian influenza, in particular the need for speed. "Alert must be lightning-quick,” Diouf stressed. “Reaction must be immediate in combating a disease which can move, across borders and continents, terrifyingly fast.”

The centre is designed to ensure this immediate reaction capacity through rapid deployment teams which provide fast and effective specialized technical support whenever and wherever there is an outbreak of or slightest risk of infection from a transboundary disease, or there is a serious threat to food safety.

Two types of rapid deployment teams spearhead the work of the CMC - rapid assessment teams and rapid response teams. Their job is first to assess the situation on the ground and then deliver rapid solutions that help bring an immediate halt to the events that led to the crisis.

These teams are staffed on an ad hoc basis, with members drawn from rosters of professional technical officers with widespread international experience, many of them based in FAO's partners throughout the world. These officers come from a wide range of technical and scientific disciplines depending on the nature of the crisis in question and are supported by experts from many other sectors including economists, wildlife professionals, social scientists, information systems and data analysts, and communication professionals.

The Centre is headed by a manager, Karin Schwabenbauer, former Chief Veterinary Officer of the German Federal Republic, and a deputy, Gary Brickler, on secondment from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services. They are backed by a high-level team covering the centre's core activities: surveillance, warning and response, emergency operations, finance and administration. Operational support to the CMC will be provided by FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Division.

The centre is funded by FAO with support from the governments of the United States, Germany and France, the Asian Development Bank, and through its Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) which, to date, has disbursed contributions from China, France, Greece, Jordan, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and Switzerland.
Emergence of dominant avian influenza strain would be no surprise
FAO and OIE recommend increased surveillance when vaccinating

The world's two leading animal health agencies – FAO and OIE – say they would not be surprised if a new H5N1 virus sublineage in poultry, known as the 'Fujian-like strain', has become the dominant strain circulating in parts of Asia.

News of the new strain was published in the November issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

While there is a wide variety of avian influenza strains in animals, and influenza viruses in general have a high rate of change from season to season and from year to year, FAO's Chief Veterinary Officer Joseph Domenech and OIE Director-General Bernard Vallat warn that with new strains developing continually in avian influenza viruses, vaccines currently in use for poultry need to be assessed regularly.

Monitor vaccination with care

Vaccination remains part of the FAO-OIE strategy to contain highly pathogenic avian influenza and both organizations say that vaccination campaigns should be applied appropriately and carefully monitored according to FAO and OIE technical guidelines, including the use of quality-controlled vaccines and a cold chain in order to protect them. Vaccination must be carried out along with other disease control measures, such as improved hygiene on the farm, animal movement management or market inspection and culling in case of outbreaks, says Domenech.

The two organizations continue to recommend that vaccination control measures be accompanied by surveillance and post-vaccination monitoring. They also stress the need to immediately report any unexpected poultry deaths to veterinary authorities.

According to Vallat, "commitment is needed from all governments to implement prevention and control programmes such as surveillance of virus circulation and, where appropriate, vaccination programmes in countries where the virus is endemic or where there is a high risk of introduction of the virus."

FAO and OIE are already supporting such programmes in key countries where the virus is still circulating. But, they say more information on control programmes based on vaccination is needed and urge more research be funded to better understand the epidemiology and genetic changes of the H5N1 virus.

Sharing data

FAO, OIE and a myriad of scientific experts on avian influenza have repeatedly called upon scientists around the world to share their findings and virus strains in a timely and transparent fashion. The OIE/FAO Avian Influenza Network with its secretariat in Padova, Italy (OFFLU - http://www.offlu.net) is a platform where member countries and scientists can share valuable information with the international veterinary and medical community. It is imperative that global health concerns and timely information sharing override lags in the scientific publications approval process, which may take from a few months to more that a year.

According to Domenech, it is essential during outbreaks that pathogens, such as the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, be isolated from clinical cases and that any changes in the character of the virus be monitored to ensure that vaccine manufacturers are producing vaccines which are effective against virus strains in circulation and comply with OIE standards.

Should the changes be significant enough to warrant reformulation of the vaccine, FAO and OIE say it would be in the best interest of global health for this to be done by vaccine producers.
Scientists from such institutes as the Istituto Zooprofilatico Sperimentale delle Venezie (Italy), Veterinary Laboratories Agency (UK), Southeastern Poultry Research Laboratory (USA), Australian Animal Health Laboratory, and Friedrich Loeffler Institute (Germany) have voiced their support for the FAO and OIE position that vaccine delivery alone is insufficient to halt virus circulation and to protect animal or human health.

“In an area where poultry populations have been vaccinated, well-planned serological studies must be conducted with full disclosure of the modalities of vaccination use in the poultry population, including the use of the cold chain and types of vaccines and date of last vaccination so results can be clearly interpreted,” says Vallat.

**European Commission earmarks 35.5 million dollars for avian influenza research**

The European Commission has allocated 35.5 million U.S. dollars for 17 avian influenza research projects in the fields of animal and human health. The money will be administered through a newly created fund for avian and pandemic human influenza, which aims to ensure that research needs – including those identified by FAO, OIE and World Health Organization (WHO) – are well covered.

The animal health projects cover vaccines, better diagnosis and early warning systems, increased knowledge of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, technology transfer to third world countries and a network for monitoring migratory birds. For human health, the projects cover research on better understanding of how the flu virus works and clinical research on vaccine development. (Source: European Union, 17 October 2006)

*For a full report, see*
NOTE: This map represents occurrences of HPAI reported from 15 September to 10 November 2006. H5 cases are represented in this map only for countries in which H5N1 is known to be endemic and where N-subtype characterization is not being performed for secondary cases. Countries with H5N1 occurrence only in wild birds are not considered as infected according to OIE status.
AT A GLANCE
The latest HPAI outbreaks as of 22 November 2006

Note
AIDEnews publishes reports of confirmed HPAI cases only to avoid any form of association with rumours or suspicions. AIDEnews uses the following sources, which are clearly identified for all reports: FAO, OIE, European Commission, United Nations and national governments.

AFRICA
Cote d’Ivoire
Two domestic turkeys which died on 9 November near the village Abatta were tested positive for avian influenza subtype H5N1 in the Central Veterinary Laboratory of Bingerville du Lanada. Samples have been sent to the OIE/FAO Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza in Padova for confirmation. A total of 76 birds were culled on 21 November as a preventive measure. (Government of Cote d’Ivoire, 21 November)
( Note: this data has not been entered in the Most Recent Outbreaks Reported by Countries 2006 list or the Summary of confirmed HPAI outbreaks in affected countries table, pending reference laboratory confirmation)

Egypt
The Egyptian Health Ministry reported that a new case of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza among domestic fowl had been discovered in Luxor, some 680 km south of Cairo, in October. Tests on domestic birds at the city's Najaa al-Abayda Laboratory turned up positive for the H5N1 virus, according to the ministry. The area has been quarantined, birds are being culled and those thought to have come into close contact with infected fowl are being examined. (Egyptian Health Ministry, 11 November)

Nigeria
An outbreak of HPAI has been reported in Anambra State in the eastern part of Nigeria. Clinical signs indicative of HPAI were first noticed on 30 September and samples were sent to NVRI on 9 October. Records showed that the farm had about 1,900 layers before the outbreak and that 255 of them died. NVRI confirmed HPAI on 10 October and depopulation of the remaining 1,645 birds was carried out on 12 October. (FAO, 10 November)

South Africa
Following a confirmed outbreak of HPAI H5N2 in ostriches in June 2006, all ostriches in the farm concerned and in surrounding farms were culled; subsequent sero-surveillance results obtained within a 10-km radius were negative. Following the completion of all culling and disinfection operations on 26 July, South Africa has declared itself free of highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza as of 26 October. (OIE, 27 October)

Sudan
Through OIE, Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Animal Resources reported on the HPAI outbreak situation in August in Juba, southern Sudan, where 20 ducks and 30 chickens in backyard systems died. All infected and in-contact birds in Juba town have been depopulated and a total ban on live poultry and poultry meat movement is in place from Juba town to other parts of southern Sudan. (OIE, 30 September)

ASIA
China
Through OIE, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture reported HPAI outbreaks in Ningxia Hui (1,000 dead birds) and Inner Mongolia (985 dead birds). RT-PCR tests confirmed the HPAI virus sub-type H5N1. (OIE, 4 October)
Republic of Korea
An outbreak of HPAI H5N1 has been confirmed in a broiler chicken parent stock farm in Iksan, Jeollabuk Province. Of a total of 13,300 birds, 6,500 died and the remaining 6,800 were destroyed. This is the first new outbreak of the disease in the country since March 2004. (OIE, 22 November)

Viet Nam
Ducks died en masse on 10 October at a farm in Duc Trong District. The farm housed 4,000 ducks, which were illegally imported from Ho Chi Minh City. FAO is encouraging further laboratory analysis of samples. (FAO, 10 October)

EUROPE

Albania
There have been no new cases of HPAI in Albania since 23 March 2006, when a stamping out policy was applied. In accordance with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Albania has declared itself free from highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza. (OIE, 27 October)

Croatia
Since a confirmed outbreak of the H5N1 virus in wild birds in February 2006, there have been no subsequent incidents, but a national monitoring programme for avian influenza in wild birds is continuing. (OIE, 27 October)

Hungary
There have been no further cases of HPAI since the last confirmed outbreak in June 2006. In line with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Hungary has thus declared itself a highly pathogenic avian influenza free country, as of 16 October 2006. (OIE, 16 October)

Ukraine
1,279 birds have been shot for veterinary analysis, following the discovery of the avian influenza virus in ducks in the area of Dzhankojskom, in pigeons in Krasnogvardejskom and in rooks in the Bakhchysarai area. (FAO, 8 November)

Russia
Five poultry farms in Chechnya have "reported" losses due to HPAI. FAO is to facilitate sample shipment to an international reference laboratory. (FAO, 3 November)

Most Recent Outbreaks Reported by Countries 2006

Korea (Republic of) (November 2006)
China, Egypt, Nigeria, Viet Nam (October 2006)
Cambodia, Indonesia, Sudan, Thailand (August 2006)
Hungary, Lao PDR, Russia, Spain (July 2006)
Côte d'Ivoire, Mongolia, Niger, Romania, Ukraine (June 2006)
Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Denmark (H5), Germany, Poland (May 2006)
Afghanistan, Djibouti, France, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sweden (H5), Palestine Authority (April 2006)
Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan (H5), Cameroon, Croatia, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (March 2006)
Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China (Hong Kong SAR), Georgia, Iran, Iraq (H5), Italy, Slovakia (February 2006)

Sources: FAO, OIE, European Commission (EC), United Nations and national governments

Blue: wild birds only
## SUMMARY OF CONFIRMED HPAI OUTBREAKS IN AFFECTED COUNTRIES
(as of 22 November 2006)

**Sources:** FAO, OIE, European Commission (EC), United Nations and national governments – WHO for human cases/deaths

**Note:** Highlighted countries indicate those in which there has been only one officially confirmed outbreak

### EUROPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First outbreak</th>
<th>Latest outbreak</th>
<th>Animals affected to date</th>
<th>Human cases / deaths to date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td>9 March 2006</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>27 March 2006</td>
<td>19 May 2006</td>
<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>12 March 2006</td>
<td>22 May 2006</td>
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<td>Wild birds - domestic poultry</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>30 March 2006</td>
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### AFRICA

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Niger</td>
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<td>Sudan</td>
<td>25 March 2006</td>
<td>4 August 2006</td>
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### NEAR EAST

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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Domestic poultry – wild birds (Laboratory confirmation date)</td>
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<td>China (Hong Kong SAR)</td>
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<td>Viet Nam</td>
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<td>10 October 2006</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## ANEX 1 CONTACT POINTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Department</th>
<th>Address 1</th>
<th>Address 2</th>
<th>Tel Number</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph Domenech</strong></td>
<td>Chief, Animal Health Service (AGAH)</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cristina Amaral</strong></td>
<td>Senior Operations Officer, Emergency Operations Service (TCEO)</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Cristina.Amaral@fao.org">Cristina.Amaral@fao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vincent Martin</strong></td>
<td>Animal Health Officer</td>
<td>FAO HQ, Room C551</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>(+39) 06 5705 5428</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Vincent.Martin@fao.org">Vincent.Martin@fao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phil Harris</strong></td>
<td>ECTAD Information Officer</td>
<td>FAO HQ, Room B-708bis</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>(+39) 06 570 55918</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Phil.Harris@fao.org">Phil.Harris@fao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laurence Gleeson</strong></td>
<td>Regional Manager, ECTAD</td>
<td>FAO ROASAP, Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+662) 697 4217</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Laurence.Gleeson@fao.org">Laurence.Gleeson@fao.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2  LABORATORIES AND SAMPLE SHIPPING INFORMATION

ITALY

OIE/FAO and National Reference Laboratory, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS) delle Venezie, Padova

Types of specimen
Specimens for analysis may be virus isolates prepared in a submitting country or clinical specimens, such as tissues or swabs, collected from diseased birds.

Note:
Venice Marcopolo Airport only accepts material classified as “diagnostic samples” (code UN3373).

Packaging requirements
All materials should be in leak-proof containers. Packaging should be made up of three layers: (1) primary container, (2) secondary packaging and (3) rigid outer packaging.

Packaging of “diagnostic samples” (code UN3373) should comply with IATA PI650 standard. Packaging of “virus isolates” (code UN2814 for avian influenza virus and UN2900 for Newcastle virus) should comply with IATA PI602 standard.

Contact couriers to confirm the provision of boxes complying with these requirements.

Accompanying documents for clearance
Import permissions of the Italian Ministry of Health (formerly provided by the IZS). A signed pro forma invoice (original with signature, no photocopy accepted) should be attached firmly to the box.

Shipping
Air freight or couriers via Milan Malpensa Airport (recommended, airport code: MXP), Rome Fiumicino Airport (couriers only, airport code: FCO) or Venice Marcopolo Airport (airport code: VCE, for diagnostic samples only, no isolates – code UN3373).

Arrange for shipments to arrive in Italian airports from Monday to Thursday only.

Shipping address
Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie
Virology Department
Viale dell'Università 10
35020 Legnaro, Padova
Italy

Notification of shipment
Before shipping, please supply the IZS contact person with the following information:
• Date of embarkation
• Airline name and flight number
• Date of arrival in Italy
• Name of destination airport
• Airway bill number (fax as soon as possible to: [+39] 049 808 4360)
• Person to contact with the results of analysis (supply name, fax number and e-mail address)

Contact people at IZS
For diagnostic samples and viral isolates
Micaela Mandelli (mmandelli@izsvenezie.it)
Maria Serena Beato (msbeato@izsvenezie.it)
Phone: [+39] 049 8084371
Fax: [+39] 049 8084360

For reagents
Micaela Mandelli (mmandelli@izsvenezie.it)
William Dundon (wdundon@izsvenezie.it)

Other contact persons
Giovanni Cattoli (gcattoli@izsvenezie.it)
Alessandro Cristalli (acristalli@izsvenezie.it)

Important: Contact the IZS to discuss testing and testing materials before shipping. Provide details of the contact person with whom IZS should keep in touch.
**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), Ames, Iowa**

**Import permit**
Packages containing diagnostic specimens or organisms (infectious materials) imported from foreign locations into the United States of America must be accompanied by a permit issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This permit, together with proper packaging and labelling, will expedite clearance of the package through U.S. Customs. One copy of the permit should be attached to the outside of the shipping container and a second copy placed just inside the lid of the outer shipping container. The permit can be obtained from NVSL.

**Packaging requirements**
All materials should be in leak-proof containers and packaged to withstand breakage. All materials should be properly labelled.

**Shipping address**
National Veterinary Services Laboratories
Diagnostic Virology Laboratory
1800 Dayton Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010
United States of America

**Notification of shipment**
Please provide the Diagnostic Virology Laboratory with shipping information (date of arrival, airline/courier, weigh bill number, etc.) as soon as it is available. Fax information to (+1) 515 663-7348 or telephone (+1) 515 663-7551.

**Contact**
Dr. Beverly J Schmitt
Tel (+1) 515 663 7532
Fax (+1) 515 663-7348
Beverly.J.Schmitt@usda.gov
**AUSTRALIA**

**Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL), Geelong**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of specimen</th>
<th>Specimens submitted to AAHL for disease diagnosis may be either virus isolates prepared in the submitting country or clinical specimens, such as tissues or swabs, collected from diseased birds.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import permit and packing</td>
<td>Copies of Australian import permits, suitable transport containers and packing instructions are available from AAHL by contacting <a href="mailto:aahl-accessions@csiro.au">aahl-accessions@csiro.au</a>. All specimens must be packed in leak-proof containers in accordance with appropriate IATA regulations and appropriately labelled. Copies of the import permit and other consignment details should be attached to the outside of the package to expedite clearance through Australian customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of shipment</td>
<td>When submitting specimens, please contact the accessions clerk at <a href="mailto:accessions@csiro.au">accessions@csiro.au</a>, the Duty Veterinarian at <a href="mailto:dutyvet@csiro.au">dutyvet@csiro.au</a> or Dr. Peter Daniels on (+61) 3 5227 5000 and provide consignment details (including consignment note/air weigh bill number, courier/airline and expected arrival date) so that the specimens can be collected upon arrival in Australia. Alternatively send the information by fax to (+61) 3 5227 5555.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Shipping address | The Director  
Australian Animal Health Laboratory  
5 Portarlington Road, Geelong, 3220  
Australia  
Telephone (+61) 3 5227 5000  
Fax (+61) 3 5227 5555  
http://www.csiro.au/aahl |
| Contact | You may also wish to discuss the testing required with Peter Daniels (peter.daniels@csiro.au) or Paul Selleck (paul.selleck@csiro.au) on (+61) 3 5227 5000 prior to submitting the specimens. |
**UNITED KINGDOM**  
FROM outside the European Union  
**Avian Virology Laboratory, Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge**

**Packaging requirements**  
All materials should be in leak-proof containers, packed to IATA regulations by a registered IATA packer. At least two layers of packaging should be used and the inner layer treated lightly with disinfectant.  
The outer packaging must be marked as follows:  
**ANIMAL PATHOGEN - PACKAGE ONLY TO BE OPENED AT THE AVIAN VIROLOGY SECTION, VETERINARY LABORATORIES AGENCY, WEYBRIDGE, SURREY**  
The packaging must also be marked with one of the following IMPORT LICENCE NUMBERS:  
For Newcastle disease: AHZ/2232/2002/5  
For avian influenza, other viruses, avian tissue, serum, faeces and eggs: AHZ/2074C/2004/3

**Shipping address**  
Ruth Manvell  
Avian Virology Laboratory  
Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA)  
Weybridge, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 3NB  
United Kingdom

**Shipment instructions**  
A letter should accompany parcels with as much history about the isolates as possible (including species and age, area/country of isolation, clinical history if any, etc.).  
If sending by air freight, it is essential that the airway bill number is given to the Avian Virology Laboratory, VLA-Weybridge by fax, telephone or e-mail before the arrival of the materials in order to facilitate early delivery.

**Notification of shipment**  
Before dispatch, notify the Avian Virology Laboratory, VLA-Weybridge of the shipment details and the person to contact with information on results (name, fax number, e-mail address).  
Tel: (+44) 01932 357736  
Fax: (+44) 01932 357856  
e-mail: r.manvell@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk

**Contact**  
If you wish to discuss a submission and options for support from the International Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease, please contact:  
Dr. I. H. Brown  
Tel: (+44) 01932 357 339  
Fax: (+44) 01932 357 239  
e-mail: i.h.brown@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk