



PRESS RELEASE

AN ALERT MESSAGE ON BIRD FLU OUTBREAKS STATUS

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development in collaboration with the national task force for avian influenza preparedness and response in Malawi would like to inform the general public that an outbreak of "bird flu" has been detected and officially reported on a commercial poultry breeding farm for broilers and layers in Zimbabwe. This follows other recently reported outbreaks in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as well.

Bird flu is a deadly and highly contagious disease of poultry that is transmitted through contact with infected domesticated and wild birds. The disease can also cause fatal disease in humans as well. In view of close proximity of Zimbabwe and DRC to Malawi, the status poses high risk of possible disease incursion into the country considering that Malawi trade regionally in poultry and poultry products. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development has therefore intensified its preventative measures to ensure that the disease is not introduced into the country. The measures include:

- Enforcement of the importation ban on poultry and poultry products from Zimbabwe, and DRC. This is in accordance with Terrestrial Animal Health code by the World Organisation for Animal Health which recommends that "disease free" countries do not import from known infected countries or zones until the disease is fully controlled.
- Intensification of surveillance in high risk areas including border posts
- Reactivation of the rapid response teams for bird flu prevention and control

- Intensifying aware on the disease to the Poultry Industry in Malawi and general Public.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water development would also like to assure the general public that it is doing everything possible to protect the nation from the disease entering into the country.

The Ministry will continue to regularly update the general public on the status of this deadly disease. For more information please contact Dr Patrick Chikungwa (088371509/0999449731)

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**SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION
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7/06/2017