

Mon 17 Oct 2005

Bird flu detected in Greece

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Greek officials have confirmed a case of bird flu on a turkey farm on a small island in the eastern Aegean, the first case of bird flu to be found in the European Union.

Agriculture Minister Evangelos Basiaskos said that the avian influenza virus was discovered in one of nine turkeys on a farm in the island of Oinouses, opposite the island of Chios.

Basiakos said that a turkey farmer on the island had contacted a local veterinary service and reported "the presence of strange symptoms and losses among the turkeys."

A Greek agricultural ministry statement said: "The Centre for Veterinary Institutes has informed us that one of nine poultry samples has tested positive to birdflu (H5) anitbodies."

Samples from the farm will now be subjected to more rigorous testing to determine whether disease is the H5N1 strain of the virus that authorities fear could mutate into a form infectious to humans and cause a pandemic.

The agriculture ministry placed the farm under quarantine and banned the movement of all people, animals and produce from the farm without permission and ordered the farm to be disinfected.

Greek health services had already been on alert after cases of the potentially deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu were confirmed in Turkey and Romania. Greek authorities have also invited health ministers from the Balkan and Black Sea countries to a meeting to co-ordinate a response to any bird flu outbreak but no date has yet been set.

Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)
- [WHO - Bird Flu fact sheet](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)

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- [Bird flu](http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=161)

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Last updated: 17-Oct-05 16:46 GMT

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