

THE SCOTSMAN

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Spreading day by day, virus strikes at heart of Russia

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BIRD flu continued its spread across the globe yesterday, appearing for the first time in European Russia and again in rural China.

Preliminary tests on hundreds of birds to the south of Moscow detected the H5N1 flu strain. Russia's agriculture ministry said 220 of 3,000 domestic birds in the village of Yandovka had died. Birds on six affected farms were being destroyed, and local officials had decided to kill all poultry in the village.

It was also reported that some 200,000 people in the region were given standard flu vaccinations, so that if anyone became infected with the bird flu virus, it would hopefully not mix with a human flu strain in the body and create a dangerous hybrid.

China, meanwhile, announced a fresh outbreak of bird flu, saying 2,600 birds had died from the disease in Inner Mongolia.

The deaths, at a farm near the region's capital, Hohhot, were due to the H5N1 strain.

A case in Turkey was the first to be detected in mainland Europe and H5N1 has since spread to Romania.

More recently, a strain has been found on the Aegean island of Oinousses in Greece. The results of tests to find out if it is H5N1 are due next week. Tests are also being carried out on birds found in Bulgaria and Croatia.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation has warned of a marked increase in the chances of bird flu moving to the Middle East and to vulnerable Africa as well, while the European Union has announced plans for an exercise simulating a human flu pandemic to improve readiness in case the bird virus mutates to form a strain dangerous to people.

Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)
<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](#)



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