

Japanese scientists track bird flu strains

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The Japanese government will destroy 8,500 chickens at a poultry farm in Bando, Ibaraki prefecture, after scientists found genes of the avian flu virus.

The farm is located within a restricted area where other farms have recently been hit by a diluted strain of the bird flu virus. Studies on samples taken from the farm located 0.7 miles west of the first flu-hit farm were found carrying the genes of the virus, the Asahi Shimbun reported Monday.

The strain was first confirmed at a farm in Mitsukaido, Ibaraki Prefecture, on June 26.

Since then, prefectural government officials and other authorities have conducted a series of tests at poultry farms within a three-mile radius of the flu-hit farm. The transport of poultry, eggs and other items is banned within that area.

Chickens at five other farms contained antibodies that indicated the birds had been infected with the virus in the past.

At one of the farms, the same diluted strain of the bird virus was confirmed on July 1.

The government will conduct highly precise virus-separation tests to determine if the chickens at the Bando farm still carry the virus.

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