

Bird flu spreads to Switzerland

March 2 2006

A British laboratory has reportedly confirmed the H5N1 strain of avian flu has spread to Switzerland.

The Veterinary Laboratory Agency in Weybridge, England, confirmed the body of a duck found Saturday in Geneva tested positive for the virus, The Times of London reported Thursday. A duck found on the German side of Lake Constance was confirmed last week as having been infected by the virus.

The discoveries came as a group of U.S. military scientists urged creation of a global network of laboratories to contain outbreaks of bird flu and other diseases that could start a world pandemic, The Times said. The scientists noted most developing nations where new infections are most likely to start lack the resources to adequately respond.

The scientists from the U.S. Department of Defense, writing in the journal Nature, say the absence of adequate surveillance in much of Africa, South America and Asia leaves a gap in the world's defenses against an influenza pandemic.

The Times said the authors are affiliated to the U.S. military's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System, which they suggest be used as a model for a laboratory network.

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