

## Gloomy start to year of rooster as bird flu hits South Korea

December 27 2016, by Youkyung Lee

---



In this Monday, Dec. 26, 2016 photo, health officials wearing protective suits carry a sack containing killed chickens after they were slaughtered at a chicken farm where a suspected case of bird flu was reported in Incheon, South Korea. South Korea's government said Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016 that about 26 million head of poultry will be culled by Wednesday including about one-third of the country's egg-laying hens after the H5N6 strain of avian influenza was found in farms and parks. (Yun Tae-hyun/Yonhap via AP)

The year of the rooster looks set for a gloomy start. Egg prices are soaring and new year's festivals are being canceled as South Korea fights its worst bird flu outbreak in a decade.

South Korea's government said Tuesday that about 26 million head of poultry will be culled by Wednesday, including about one-third of the country's egg-laying hens, after the H5N6 strain of [avian influenza](#) was found in farms and parks.

The latest outbreak, first reported on Nov. 17, is the worst in South Korea among six since 2003. The highly contagious influenza has spread to all provinces including a major park in south of Seoul and a scenic wetland area in the south. No human cases have been reported.

The bird flu and the subsequent slaughters have reduced supplies: As of Friday, egg prices paid by wholesalers had almost doubled from a year earlier while prices paid by consumers jumped 30 percent.

The government plans to subsidize shipping fees and temporarily lift tariffs on imported eggs to ease shortages. Officials said the government might buy eggs from overseas if prices continue to rise.

It all spells an inauspicious start to the year of the rooster, or chicken, according to the Asian zodiac.

One of the most popular end-of-year activities in South Korea is to climb a mountain or visit the seashore to watch the last sunset of the year or the first sunrise of the new year.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people gather in the eastern county of Ulju in the city of Ulsan to watch the sunrise from a seaside park. That event will not be held this weekend, the county said, one of many festivities cancelled to minimize the risk of the flu spreading.



In this Sunday, Dec. 18, 2016 photo, a customer looks at eggs at a discount store in Seoul, South Korea. South Korea's government said Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016 that about 26 million head of poultry will be culled by Wednesday including about one-third of the country's egg-laying hens after the H5N6 strain of avian influenza was found in farms and parks. (Shin Jun-hee/Yonhap via AP)

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Gloomy start to year of rooster as bird flu hits South Korea (2016, December 27)  
 retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-gloomy-year-rooster-bird-flu.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.