

# Egypt reports bird flu outbreaks in rural area

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In this Feb. 24, 2007 file photo, poultry traders feed some of their birds in the village of Tanta in the Nile deltas, 150 kilometers (93 miles) north of the capital Cairo, Egypt. Local authorities in rural Egypt have declared a state of emergency after detecting two outbreaks of bird flu. The head of the veterinary agency in a southwestern province said Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020, that avian influenza was detected in the Dakhla Oasis, located over 750 km (470 miles) from the capital, Cairo. Egypt suffered a major outbreak of bird flu in 2006 that led to the suspension of all poultry exports. (AP Photo/Said Abu el-Einein, File)

Local authorities in rural Egypt have declared a state of emergency after detecting two outbreaks of bird flu.

Nagy Awad, head of the veterinary agency in the southwestern province of al-Wadi al-Gedid, said Sunday that [avian influenza](#) was detected in two poultry farms in the villages of Ezab el-Qasr and Oweina in the Dakhla Oasis, located over 750 kilometers (470 miles) from the capital, Cairo.

He said the infected birds were culled and authorities have carried out medical examinations of people who were in contact with them. The virus, which is mainly spread through contact with infected animals, can cause [severe illness](#) or death in humans.

Egypt suffered a major outbreak of bird flu in 2006 that led to the suspension of all poultry exports. Authorities have been pressing to renew them, and earlier this year, the World Organization for Animal Health, an intergovernmental body, had declared Egypt free of bird flu for the first time in 14 years.

The H5N1 strain of bird flu spread in early 2000s in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, leading to the slaughter of tens of millions of chickens and ducks. Hundreds of people were infected, many of whom died, according to the World Health Organization.

Egypt is at high risk because many of its poultry farms are in residential areas. Many Egyptians also raise pigeons and chickens at home to supplement their income. Even in dense urban areas, birds are kept on rooftops, balconies and courtyards.

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