

Avian flu spreading in Israel

20 March 2006

Israeli officials say avian flu has been confirmed in two more southern Israel farming communities, bringing to six the number of such sites.

Poultry growers' associations Monday were demanding the government declare the outbreak a natural disaster, allowing additional compensation to farmers. The associations say bird flu might cause Israel's poultry industry to collapse, leaving thousands of people without a livelihood, the Ha'aretz newspaper reported Monday.

Israeli veterinary officials confirmed Sunday the bird flu virus that has struck in southern Israel is the lethal H5N1 strain, which may pose a danger to people who come into regular contact with the fowl.

The virus was found at the Kibbutz Nir Oz and Moshav Amioz, both types of farming communities located within about six miles of the location where the virus was first discovered, Ynetnews.com said.

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