

Bird flu worries increase in South Korea

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South Korean agriculture officials boosted the country's bird flu risk level to 'orange' this week after recent outbreaks on poultry farms.

It is the second-highest risk level in South Korea's alert system, Yonhap News Agency said Wednesday.

Confirmation of an outbreak in Pyeongtaek, about 43 miles from Seoul, has raised concerns that bird flu may be spreading nationwide, Yonhap said. Officials said there were 20 confirmed cases of bird flu and another 16 that are under investigation.

Agriculture officials said it will be conducting year-round blood serum blood testing at poultry farms to detect any signs of bird flu infection. The government also plans to increase penalties against anyone who breaks quarantine rules.

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