

At least 10 years to eradicate bird flu: UN health agency

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It will take at least 10 years to eradicate the H5N1 bird flu virus, which has killed scores of humans, from poultry in the six countries where it is endemic, a UN agency said Thursday.

The strain of the [avian influenza virus](#) was reported in 60 countries at its peak in 2006 but most had managed to stamp it out, the Food and Agriculture Organisation said in a report.

It however remained "firmly entrenched" in Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Vietnam, including because of the nature of their production and market chains, and quality of veterinary services, it said.

Another factor was that in these countries "fear of H5N1 does not necessarily translate into concrete plans for [virus](#) control and elimination," the report said.

The H5N1 strain of avian influenza has killed around 320 people worldwide since 2003.

"Eliminating the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian [influenza](#) virus from poultry in the six countries where it remains endemic will take 10 or more years," the agency said in a statement.

It made recommendations for each country regarding measures they should take over the next five years to enable them to eliminate the virus.

"They contain a mix of measures aimed at outbreak control and response, gathering and analysing information, and disease prevention and risk reduction," it said.

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