

24,000 ducks destroyed in Australia after bird flu

February 1 2012

Some 24,000 Australian ducks were being destroyed Wednesday after testing positive for a low pathogenic strain of the bird flu virus, an outbreak which has prompted poultry export bans in parts of Asia.

The Australian Chicken Meat Foundation said the outbreak of the strain of avian influenza appeared to be confined to two linked duck farms in the southern state of Victoria and any ban on exports was an over-reaction.

Foundation chief Andreas Dubs said Japan's suspension of all Australian poultry imports and Hong Kong's ban on imports from Victoria would have the biggest impact.

"It is often the case that a country might over-react a little at the first news," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"I think that might be the case with Japan, that the initial reaction is to stop everything and hopefully, in due course, a few days, those limitations might be lifted."

Dubs said the outbreak appeared to be isolated and had not affected a chicken farm.

"There's no reason to believe that there are any infections elsewhere," he told AFP, but added that there would be continued surveillance after the virus was picked up during routine testing.

He said while the strain involved posed a potential risk to chickens, it was not a public health or [food safety](#) risk.

"There's obviously no danger to humans," he said.

Victoria's deputy premier Peter Ryan said the Australian [poultry market](#) had a strong reputation and the [outbreak](#) would not have a long-term impact.

"These issues do arise intermittently and I'm sure it will be accommodated sooner than later and we'll be back in the market," he said.

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