

French poultry exports hit by bird flu: ministry

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A string of countries in Asia and north Africa have banned imports of French poultry following a bird flu outbreak, the agriculture ministry said Thursday in Paris.

Algeria, China, Egypt, Japan, Morocco, South Korea, Thailand and Tunisia have stopped imports following the outbreak last month in the southwestern area of Dordogne, said Loic Evain, deputy head of the ministry's food division.

"The list is not exhaustive," Evain said, but does not include France's 27 European Union partners, who have accepted containment measures proposed by Paris under World Health Organisation guidelines.

"Unfortunately some countries' first reaction is to close their borders and only then to discuss" strategy, Evain said.

He added that "for the time being there is no decision" to block French poultry by Gulf region states which are major consumers.

South Korea imposed its ban last Thursday on imports of French poultry and live birds after the European Commission confirmed birds at a French chicken farm were infected with the H5N1 strain.

The commission ordered all 32 birds at the farm to be culled and called for close monitoring of neighbouring [poultry farms](#).

Bird flu outbreaks have been reported in Asia, Europe, North America, Africa and the Middle East. South Korea was also hit by a string of outbreaks of the virus this year.

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