

KPI Safety Information SalN-April-2013 **(Bird Flu in China)**

According to the recent news; there is a new outbreak of Bird Flu (H7N9 avian influenza) in China, which has already killed six people in the country, as Shanghai's live poultry markets remained shut.

China has confirmed 18 cases of the H7N9 strain, the health ministry said on Saturday, since announcing a week ago that the virus had been found in humans for the first time.

The human infections have been confined to eastern China. Shanghai has recorded eight cases, including four deaths, and two other fatalities have been reported in the neighbouring province of Zhejiang.

One of the Zhejiang cases ate quail bought at a market in the city of Hangzhou, at which authorities began culling birds on Saturday after finding quail infected with H7N9, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Cook well

Shanghai had culled more than 20,500 birds at an agricultural market in a western suburb by Friday, after the virus was found in pigeons, and the government announced a ban on live poultry trading and markets.

But eggs remained on sale, as well as fresh and frozen poultry meat, as officials encouraged people to cook them well.

Chinese authorities maintain there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, a conclusion echoed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

State media said the government had sought to improve transparency on the disease after being accused of covering up the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed about 800 people globally.

A sceptic critique commented that:

"This is a 'novel' (non-human) virus and therefore has the potential to cause a pandemic if it were to change to become easily and sustainably spread from person-to-person,"

The US government on Friday advised American citizens living in China of the cases but said no travel or trade restrictions would be applied to the country based on the current situation.

This Safety Information is issued to warn all mariners plying in the disease infected areas. There is not much info about the issue yet but the mariners are cautioned to practice due diligence concerning the matter & avoid as far as it is practicable to purchase poultry & related products from China. So far no human to human case is reported but it is always better to take preventive measures.