

Department Circulars: - 04/2025

My Number: - DAPH/AH/02/07/05

Department of Animal Production and Health
Peradeniya.

2025.06.12

Through: Provincial Chief Secretary

Through: Provincial Director-Department of Animal Production and Health

All District Veterinary Officers/Deputy Directors/Government Veterinary Officers,

Through: Director – Animal Health,

All Veterinary Investigation Officers

Prevention of Ranikhet/ Newcastle disease

Ranikhet disease has been identified as a bird epidemic reported from some farms in Sri Lanka. This disease is often reported from backyard poultry farms and has adverse economic impacts due to mortality of chickens and reduced egg production.

In addition, in the export of live birds, chicken meat and eggs, many countries expect a chicken population free from Ranikhet disease in the country.

Therefore, controlling this disease in the country can minimize the adverse economic impact on farmers and is also expected to expand exports of poultry-related products.

In accordance with the powers vested in me under the Animal Diseases Act No. 59 of 1992, these guidelines are issued to control the situation of Ranikhet Epidemic disease and the following measures are to be taken for that purpose.

01. Confirmation of the epidemic situation

1. According to the Animal Diseases Act No. 59 of 1992, Ranikhet disease is classified as a notifiable avian disease. Therefore, action should be taken as per the circular issued for reporting the disease.

2. Accordingly, if any Veterinary Officer finds birds with symptoms suspected to be due to Ranikhet disease in their Veterinary Officer's Division, the officer should immediately inform the relevant Provincial Director, the Director of the Division of Animal Health (Department of Animal Production and Health), and the relevant District Veterinary Investigation Officer via telephone, fax, or email.

3. In addition, the relevant Field Veterinary Officer should investigate the information about symptomatic birds within 24 hours of the report, conduct post-mortem examinations, and duly complete the Epidemiology Initial Investigation Report (FA/OH/32 - Annex 01) and Weekly Epidemiology Report (FA/OH/33 - Annex 02) and submit them immediately to the Provincial Director and Director of the Division of Animal Health (Department of Animal Production and Health).

4. In cases of disease outbreaks, the relevant Veterinary Investigation Officer must conduct a disease investigation and submit an epidemiological report to the Director of Animal Health.
5. The District Veterinary Investigation Officers should immediately conduct the collection of virological/histological samples and rapid antigen tests required for the diagnosis of the disease and should provide full support to the Veterinary Officers in charge of the area for that task.
6. The samples collected by the District Veterinary Investigation Officers should be provided to the Veterinary Research Institute as soon as possible.
7. The samples received by the Animal Virus Laboratory, Polgolla (Veterinary Research Institute) should be tested and the relevant test reports should be submitted to the Director, Animal Health Division within 03 days and the District Veterinary Investigation Officers should be informed accordingly.

02. Basic measures to minimize the spread of the disease

1. All poultry movements from farms where animals have tested positive for the rapid antigen test should be suspended immediately until the confirmed results of the samples submitted to the Veterinary Research Institute are received. Once confirmed results are received, the farm premises should be sealed by obtaining Magistrate's Orders (in terms of Section 4 of the Animal Diseases Act, No. 59 of 1992).
2. In the early stages of the disease, in cases where the mortality rate is less than 10% and the symptoms are very mild, all healthy animals of the farm should be vaccinated using the Ranikhet primary vaccine.
3. All animals that die due to the disease should be disposed, properly as per the guidelines of the Department of Animal Products and Health.
4. Information on the bird population in all farms (including pet bird breeding establishments) located within a radius of 03 kilometres from the place where the disease was reported should be promptly provided to the Provincial Director, Department of Animal Production and Health and the Director, Division of Animal Health, Department of Animal Production and Health.
5. The Veterinary Officers in charge of the adjacent Veterinary Divisions should be informed immediately about the spread of the disease.
6. The relevant Divisional Veterinary Officer shall immediately take steps to implement a special vaccination program to provide preventive vaccination to all birds in all farms (including pet bird breeding establishments) which have not been vaccinated against Ranikhet disease within 03 months, and located within a radius of 03 kilometres from the farm where the disease started.
7. The required number of vaccine doses should be calculated according to the bird population in the relevant area/areas and informed to the Animal Health Division without delay through the Provincial Director, in order to obtain the required quantities of vaccines for vaccination programs.

03. Disease preventive measures

3.1 Basic immunization

1. It is mandatory to vaccinate all birds in farms with Ranikhet vaccine at recommended time periods, to prevent Ranikhet disease.
2. Local vaccines produced by the Department of Animal Production and Health or a registered imported vaccines can be used for this vaccination.
3. The relevant divisional veterinary officers should properly convince the farmers about the vaccination.
4. Facilities are provided to obtain locally produced vaccines from the Division of Animal Health, free of charge, based on following criteria.
 - For farms with a bird population of 1000 or less in the North-West and Western Provinces
 - For farms with a bird population of 400 or less in other provinces
5. Based on above criteria, each Provincial Director shall submit the annual requirement of Ranikhet vaccines to the Director, Division of Animal Health, Department of Animal Production and Health, by the month of August of the previous year, in accordance with the relevant format (Annexure 03).
6. Administration of the vaccinations should be carried out in accordance with departmental guidelines and special attention should be paid on the cold chain maintenance, when administering the vaccines.

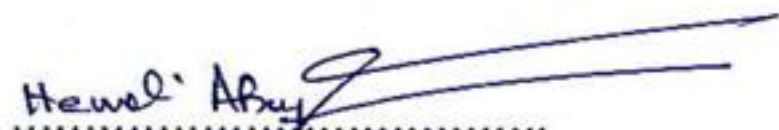
3.2 - Biosecurity measures

1. Free-range, small, medium and large-scale poultry production farms, and pet bird breeding centers must properly adhere to the biosecurity guidelines issued by the Department of Animal Production and Health and those farms must be supervised and advised by the Veterinary Officer in Charge of the Division.
2. Awareness and supervision of breeder farms and export-oriented farms on biosecurity measures will be carried out by the Division of Animal Health, Department of Animal Production and Health and the District Veterinary Investigation Officers.
3. All poultry farms located within a Veterinary Division should be registered with the relevant Veterinary Office.
4. When registering a new commercial and free-range farm, the Veterinary Officer in charge of the relevant division should conduct a formal on-site inspection and should refrain from granting approval if the relevant farm does not comply with the biosecurity criteria issued by the Department of Animal Production and Health.
5. The updated list of poultry breeding farms registered in the Department of Animal Production and Health will be sent annually to all Veterinary Officers through all Provincial

Directors by the Director (Division of Veterinary Regulatory Affairs, Department of Animal Production and Health).

3.3 Active disease surveillance

1. Active disease surveillance activities are carried out by Veterinary Investigation Officers under the coordination of the Animal Health Division.
2. The Veterinary Officers in charge of the relevant divisions shall provide necessary support to the Veterinary Investigation Officers for those activities in cases where necessary.



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Copies:

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