

## FAST FACTS ON AVIAN FLU

Feb 19 (Reuters) - The World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that bird flu killed a 37-year-old Egyptian woman.

The new case brings to 21 the number of people known to have been infected with bird flu in Egypt, which has the largest known cluster of human cases outside Asia.

H5N1 was also found to have been responsible for the deaths of 2,500 turkeys on a farm in eastern England -- the first outbreak in British poultry.

The outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza began in Asia in 2003 and has spread rapidly over the past year.

Following are some facts about the H5N1 avian flu virus and its spread around the globe.

- \* Since the virus re-emerged in Asia in 2003, outbreaks have been confirmed in around 50 countries and territories, according to data from the World Organisation for Animal Health.

- \* More than 30 countries have reported outbreaks in the past year, in most cases involving wild birds such as swans.

- \* The virus has killed 167 people since 2003, according to WHO. Countries with confirmed human deaths are: Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

- \* In total, the virus is known to have infected 273 people since 2003, according to WHO. Many of those who have died are children and young adults.

- \* Vietnam and Indonesia have the highest number of cases, accounting for 105 of the total deaths.

- \* The H5N1 virus is not new to science and was responsible for an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Scotland in 1959. Britain confirmed new cases in Scotland in April 2006 and in Suffolk earlier this month.

- \* H5N1 is not the only bird flu virus. There are numerous strains. For example, an outbreak in 2003 of the H7N7 bird flu virus in the Netherlands

led to the destruction of more than 30 million birds, around a third of the country's poultry stock. About 2.7 million were destroyed in Belgium and around 400,000 in Germany. In the Netherlands, 89 people were infected with the H7N7 virus, of whom one (a veterinarian) died.

\* The H5N1 virus made the first known jump into humans in Hong Kong in 1997, infecting 18 people and killing six of them. The government ordered the immediate culling of the territory's entire poultry flock, ending the outbreak.

\* Symptoms of bird flu in humans have ranged from typical influenza-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches, to eye inflammations (conjunctivitis), pneumonia, acute respiratory distress, viral pneumonia, and other severe and life-threatening complications.