

Brazil Starts Aggressive Info Campaign on Bird Flu in Airports

Contributed by Ivan Richard
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The Brazilian National Sanitary Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) started an information campaign today on bird flu in Brazil's international airports, especially the airports in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The campaign is directed at passengers embarking on flights to countries where cases of the disease have already occurred or regions that border on these countries. The campaign will continue indefinitely.

According to the general manager of Sanitary Surveillance of Ports, Airports, Borders, and Customs Quarters, Paulo Ricardo Nunes, 50,000 book markers and 60 thousand folders (placed in airplane seat pockets) will be distributed in this initial phase.

The literature contains orientation on precautions that international flight passengers should take to keep from catching the disease. Avoiding contact with live birds and eschewing food that is not well-cooked are among the recommendations.

"ANVISA's intention is to protect people who are leaving Brazil and going to areas where cases of the disease have been reported, making them well aware of the precautions they should adopt to avoid contact and minimize the risk of being contaminated by the disease," Nunes affirmed.

The campaign is part of a group of preventive measures the Brazilian government is taking to cope with an eventual pandemic of H5N1 influenza, the most aggressive subtype among the viruses that cause flu.

"We are already making preparations to deal with people coming from the areas in which cases of the disease have been registered," the general manager said.

"We shall intensify baggage inspection as well as gather data on the people who arrive here so that we can identify them quickly in case anyone displays symptoms."

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