



# **JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR MALAYSIA**

## **LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA**

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DISEDIAKAN OLEH:

**SEKSYEN KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT  
JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR MALAYSIA**



## Curious cook

CHRIS CHAN

SPRING has finally arrived here in France, and this time, it came with some unwanted surprises. The war in Ukraine has led to shops limiting the purchases of pasta, flour, and cooking oils due to the lack of exports from Ukraine. To make matters worse, France is currently suffering from the worst avian flu crisis in its history, which is causing the prices of poultry to rise to previously unimaginable levels.

An estimated 15 million high-quality farm birds have already been culled in France due to HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza), and the irony is the poultry most likely to be destroyed are those that are free to roam outdoors, as HPAI is transmitted by the many wild birds that enter the country, usually as migratory flocks.

A kilo of prime duck breast Eilet now costs over 25 EUR (RM115), with probably more price rises on the way, and I found this out the hard way, buying some duck for a family dinner last week. This is an increase of over 30% from what I would normally expect to pay. In the UK, one cannot even buy free range eggs as all the hens are kept inside barns to prevent them from catching HPAI.

France is particularly hard hit because poultry farms here tend to produce the highest quality eggs and birds for eating. Many farms rear their birds on open grazing lands, with a large proportion also fed on organic feeds, and generally they are also harvested later than birds in the UK or USA (where the average lifespan of a chicken is around 40-42 days).

In France, there are more varieties of chickens, and they are generally kept 40-50 days or longer, with some quality chickens kept over 60 days in free range conditions, which would just be uneconomical in other countries.

But the provision of high-quality poultry in open air or free range or organic conditions has come at a huge ecological cost. Of the 2,169 HPAI events at poultry farms notified in continental Europe at the beginning of May 2022, 1,297 such events occurred in France, some 61.3% of the total cases.

The next most affected country was Italy, with 317 events. Germany had only 72 farm-reported events, but had detected 1,193 cases in wild birds, mostly migratory species. However, this may be just a reflection of the amount of testing done on wild birds by the Germans.

### Worry?

Should we be worried? To some extent, yes, but not excessively, at least for the current moment. And I am not referring to the price of poultry in the shops.



According to the columnist, the risk of catching bird flu is currently minimal for people who don't work closely with infected poultry. — ZOE SCHAEFFER/Unplash

# Bird flu may be forever

The columnist examines the current avian flu outbreak in Europe and looks at how the virus has mutated.



KIRSTEN BÜHNE/Pezzoli



In the UK, hens are kept in barns to prevent them from catching avian flu. — ARTEM BELIAKIN/Pezzoli

There are several strains of bird flu that cause HPAI, all from a family of viruses genetically distinguished by the types of 2 proteins called Hemagglutinin and Neuraminidase found on the surface of the virus. H5N1 means Hemagglutinin type 5 and Neuraminidase type 1.

The 4 major HPAIs of concern to birds are H5N1, H7N9, H5N6 and H5N8. To some degree, some of these strains of bird flu are also of grave concern to humans.

These viruses are extremely persistent in the environment and especially in wild birds. More concerning may be evidence that some of these avian viruses have already

adapted to mammals such as red foxes, otters, polecats, ferrets, and badgers and this has happened very quickly just over the last few years. Mostly, these mammals caught the virus from eating infected birds.

Also 17 cases of HPAI infections in humans, from the strain H5N6, have been reported from China since 2013, plus one minor H5N1 human infection in the UK. Another 15 human infections from a related virus, H5N2, have also been reported from China and Cambodia since 2013.

However, recent incidences of avian flu which is deadly to humans are relatively small. In 2013, a variant of bird flu called

novel H7N9 caused 36 deaths in China out of an infected pool of 130 people (a mortality rate of over 27%). There is no confirmation that human-to-human transmission of novel H7N9 was possible, and this strain was found in chickens, ducks, and pigeons, customarily without causing any visible symptoms in the birds.

The theory of how novel H7N9 evolved to become a killer human pathogen is also particularly interesting and a sobering example of how viruses can evolve to cross species barriers. A detailed study of the genetic history of H7N9 suggested it is a triple reassorted virus, probably assembled with genes from both the H7N3 duck virus from Zhejiang and the H5N1 bird (chambling) virus from Beijing, combined into the original H7N9 virus found in Korean wild birds.

How this reassorted novel H7N9 virus adapted itself to infect humans is unclear, but some points in its genetic code implied a shift which allowed the virus to bind to human cell receptors, and an increased ability for replication in humans.

At least modern technology means that a genetic trail of novel H7N9 may be available and importantly can also be monitored for future variations. Prior to that, there was another even more lethal variant of bird flu which affected humans. It was H5N1, and it caused the deaths of over 13% of the people infected during an outbreak which began in 1997. This outbreak is still persisting in small pockets around the world ever since.

The virus found in the human case was Hong Kong, and the mean age of the people affected was over 18.8 years, compared to only 6 years for H7N9. Both viruses appear to have been transmitted to humans via infected poultry, though the exact link for H5N1 appears to be not as well understood as for H7N9.

In 2003, a major outbreak of H5N1 surfaced in Egypt, which replaced Hong Kong as the main hotspot for humans. Over 60 people were infected and 116 died from the virus in Egypt, resulting in a mortality rate of over 33.3%. To date, there are no vaccines, drugs, or treatments available to effectively prevent H5N1, and the only remedy is the complete culling of all infected or potentially infected birds.

A 2016 Egyptian study into H5N1 found that inoculation of poultry with various inactivated H5N1 and H5N2 vaccines as vaccines against the virus to display higher mutation rates, which promoted new variants able to escape the vaccines, thereby greatly reducing the efficacy of the vaccines.

### Avian flu events

Many people tend to think of bird flu as a disease which affects mainly farm poultry, probably because they mostly read news about the mass culling of poultry flocks. However, the reality is the HPAI is killing countless numbers of wild birds too, to the extent that some species are endangered. And the number of avian flu outbreaks is now seemingly increasing every year. The UK is having its biggest ever outbreak of bird flu in 2022, at the same time as France, Germany and several other European countries. It is unclear what measures may be adopted to reduce this trend.

### Now can I worry?

In terms of catching bird flu, the risk to people not actively handling infected poultry is currently minimal. Almost everyone who has been ill or died from bird flu was in contact with infected birds, and there is no evidence humans can spread bird flu. This situation may change, of course, and various health bodies around the world are carefully monitoring all incidents of human illnesses related to bird flu, just in case.

HPAI is certainly a worry for poultry farmers and wildlife conservationists. Within a very short space of time, HPAI has changed from a seasonal threat during the migratory periods to a permanent threat in many countries. In short, it appears that HPAI is now killing farm and wild birds regardless of the seasons.

How this situation developed may well be linked to climate change. Due to changes in global climate, it has been observed that birds are starting their migrations at different times than usual. As a result, migration paths are crisscrossing the paths of other birds previously unencountered in pre-global warming times. The chances therefore of catching HPAI are likely to be significantly increased, and the disease is then carried into distant areas where other birds can be infected.

Although the risk to humans is currently low, one should still avoid contact with any sick domestic or wild bird, especially one with a swollen head, or a lack of coordination, or breathing difficulties, or drooping wings, dragging feet, or body tremors, etc.

The views expressed here are entirely the writer's own.

# Tic Tac, the handycat

When the scratching poles are trashed, Tic Tac turns her paw to DIY.

WHEN Tic Tac joined the family two years ago, we set up two climbing poles for her. They are massive, running from floor to ceiling, and they're covered in sisal, a type of rope that kitties love to claw. They also have several shelves, so our pet can lounge up high above us and pretend she's a jungle jaguar – or perhaps a royal princess.

Tic Tac adores her climbing poles and her brothers do too. Inkie and Tic Tac play battle games where they race each other up the sisal and fight Robin Hood-style battles with whappy paws to see who conquers the top shelf.

Target claws them, but as he's 14 years old, and his back paws aren't that strong anymore, he sleeps on his cushions on the sofa.

With three cats sharpening their claws, the poles get a thorough workout every day. A few weeks ago we saw the sisal was fraying, so we planned a refurbishment project.

Sitting down with pen and paper, my first thought was that Miss Mackenzie, my old maths teacher, was right. I can't count for toffee.

Taking in the long poles, there was no way to guessimate how much rope would be needed. I remembered that calculating the circumference of a circle involved pi, but not much else.

Googling sourced the basic formula for calculating one twist of rope around the pole, but not how many twists it would take the cover the entire length. Also, there are different sizes of sisal rope on the market.

The original rope was very thin, sure sure, and it had lasted well. However, the advantages of thicker rope immediately presented themselves. Thicker rope meant less winding, and more sturdiness.

Frankly, I went with 1cm-thick rope as it seemed easier for the maths. I know, stocking. But there you go.

My first calculations suggested kilometres of rope, enough to reach in Melaka and back.

A very nervous 16 minutes later, we began get my attention. As a significant part of the planet likely sucks of basic algebra, there was bound to be an online sisal rope calculator for perplexed cat lovers.



**Katz tales**  
ELLEN WHYTE

There is. Top result on Google too.

Thanks to the magic of the Net, we sourced the right amount of rope a day later. As the brain had also pointed out that my handiness at DIY work is even sketchier than my maths, I persuaded my friend Emanar who is celebrated for her professional baking, sewing and all-round art skills to run the project.

On the big day, the cats were happily intrigued. The smell of the sisal had all three tails up with interest. Six sets of claws hit the rope instantly, testing to see if it clawed as well as it smelled.

Target disappeared upstairs the second Emanar's taxi arrived. He knows her but he's not keen on visitors. So he went and took possession of my office chair.

Tic Tac and Inkie were a bit shy, but as Emanar is liberally scented by her own cats Lucky, Boh and Haku, they sniffed her over. A treat cemented the friendship.

But when we trimmed the frayed rope, Inkie was appalled. His tail went down as he stared with huge yellow eyes. Tic Tac touched the bare pole, touched the rope and squeaked an inquiry. We explained and she decided to trust us, but it was clear neither cat understood.



Tic Tac helping refurbish her cat tree — ELLEN WHYTE

Inkie watched, unable to believe his eyes. He hung about on the stairs, taking it all in.

Inkie kept his distance but Tic Tac was paw-on. As we struggled with 25m of rope, just enough for the lower part of the pole, she danced about, patting the coils with her paw and squealing with excitement.

Despite the prep, we struggled with the first part of the job. As we fed the rope around the pole, we got tangles and snags. Also, it weighed a tonne.

Tic Tac helped me, which was a joy, but it also involved disentangling her paws and being careful about the tiny furry jaw clamping down.

The triumphant purrs compensated for any inconvenience. From the sparkling eyes and breathy squeaks, Tic Tac was having the time of her life.

Inkie watched for an hour and then became overwhelmed. Maybe it was the smell of the glue or perhaps simply the chaos of watching his best hangout destroyed and rebuilt, but our boy called it a day and went upstairs.

When I went to check on him, he was in bed, tail tucked under the covers, his head on the pillow and fast asleep. The excitement had tucked him out.

In contrast, Tic Tac bounced from pole to pole, snuffing at everything, and cheerleading as we worked.

Her ears flashed about like radar, her paws were hot and she purred up a storm. She was in her element.

As for the humans, our work went a lot slower than we'd foreseen. After three hours or so, we weren't even half finished.

Thankfully, we had a brainwave. First, we rolled a length of sisal into a ball, much like knitters dealing with yarn. Then, instead of each of us working our own bit of pole, we worked together.

The difference was amazing. With Emanar working the clever bit of securing the end of the rope with glue and then pressing the coils tight and neat, and me doing the donkey work of winding the ball of sisal around the pole, the job was super easy.

It took about an hour and more to do one section of pole by ourselves; it took half that time working the new system. Tic Tac helping out was just icing on the cake.

We started at noon and it was teatime by the time we were done. Both poles were covered in thick, neatly placed rope. It looked super professional, and also sturdy. But as the saying goes, the proof is in the pudding.

Tic Tac was over right away, clawing the new rope. By her happy chirps, and rapid clawing, the new system was up to scratch. Inkie and Target waited until Emanar left. The second her taxi purred away, both boys came downstairs.

They sniffed, inspected and finally, Target clawed. From the upright tail, the senior cat gave his seal of approval. Then Inkie went over, sniffed, took a deep breath, and ran up the pole.

He's a large cat, muscled like a bodybuilder, and yet he soared up the rope, clawing his way up as expertly as Brian Bartow, the world record holding lumberjack from Oregon, the United States.

With both trees tested and approved of, we celebrated with treats all round. Apart from a job well done, Tic Tac is now dead set on a career as a DIY feline snooervisor. Don't be surprised if you see her on LinkedIn as a cat tree refurbishment pro.

**Adopt Me**

**BENNY** is nine months old, fully vaccinated and neutered. This handsome boy is super sociable with people and is playful. He loves games and is looking for a loving forever home. Perhaps one with a cat tree! Interested adopters please contact SPCA Penang at Jalan Jeti Jelutong, 11600 Jelutong, Penang (phone: 04-281 6559 / website: spca-penang.net)

Photo: LILY LENG/SPCA Penang

## How to refurbish your cat tree

WHEN your tree becomes over-loved, some rope, glue and time will make your kitty's best toy purrfect again.

**Glue.** Avoid chemical-rich glues in favour of a simple wood glue. It's not exactly stuff you'd want your pet to eat, but it's non-toxic. We used a glue gun but a small tin and brush should work as well.

**Rope thickness.** Thin rope is cheaper but will take more work with taller poles. Thick rope is easier to work and longer lasting but possibly too heavy for short poles.

**Tip.** Think about the size of your cat when choosing. If the coils are too wide, your kitty may not enjoy climbing as much. Ridges are fun!

We have three adult cats, from small Tic Tac to huge Inkie. We picked 1cm, which is sturdy, and all the cats love it. Half a centimetre

would have been fine too. Bigger would maybe be a bit much.

**Rope length.** Google sisal calculator and save yourself a lot of headaches. We bought an extra few metres of rope, just to be safe, but the calculator was super accurate.

**Method.** Clear the pole of old rope. Take your coils of sisal and wind them into a ball. Have one person glue the edge of rope to the bottom of the pole. Then have either person hand the ball of sisal round and round the pole, while the gluer tucks the coils in firmly and tightly.

With a short pole, you can glue the two ends only. With a longer pole, a dab of glue halfway up is sensible.

Gently remove snooervisor kitties hanging from the rope as needed.



Rolling the sisal into a ball helps — ELLEN WHYTE



# DARI KAMERA

Ahmad Zikri terbabit perniagaan 'trading' lembu tempatan bagi kumpul modal untuk miliki kandang fidlot

## AGRO

Diah Kalfa Ithnin

kalfaithe@metromedia.com.my

Puas menimba pengalaman sebagai jurufoto bebas sehingga mengembara ke pelbagai negara demi mendapatkan sekering foto, anak kelahiran Kedah ini sememangnya tidak menyangka badang penternakan menjadi kerjayanya pada hari ini.

Hanya disebabkan perlu meneruskan legasi arwah bapanya, pemilik nama Ahmad Zikri Mohamad Zuki kini yakin bidang pertanian dan penternakan sesuatu yang menarik untuk diterokai.

Jelasnya, meskipun bapanya, Mohamad Zuki Mohamad meninggalkan beberapa ekor lembu dan ladang kelapa sawit, ia bukan sesuatu yang mudah untuk diusahakan.

"Arwah bapa saya mempunyai sekitar tujuh ekor lembu yang dibela secara 'bebas' di dalam kebun kelapa sawit dan tidak diusahakan secara serius.

"Selepas saya mula terbabit secara serius pada tahun lalu, saya melihat penternakan lembu adalah bidang yang

menarik untuk diterokai jika diusahakan secara serius," katanya.

Pada awalnya dia hanya membeli seekor sapi lembu daripada baka tempatan dan kini sudah mempunyai 14 ekor lembu.

Jelasnya, kos operasi untuk memernak lembu bukanlah melelan belasan yang kecil kerana jika ingin terbabit secara serius perlu menyediakan pelbagai kemudahan.

"Dalam tempoh setahun ini, saya banyak menimba pengalaman dengan menyertai kursus penternakan dan belajar daripada penternak tempatan yang berpengalaman.

"Perkara ini perlu kerana lembu ini kosnya agak tinggi terutama jika ingin diusahakan secara serius terutama menyediakan kandang fidlot," katanya.

Ahmad Zikri berkata, dalam tempoh setahun ini dia terbabit dalam perniagaan 'trading' lembu tempatan bagi mengumpul modal untuk mempunyai kandang fidlot.

# KE KANDANG TERNAKAN



INGIN menjadikan bidang penternakan sebagai perniagaan yang serius



AHMAD ZIKRI menukar bidang dari jurufoto bebas kepada bidang perternakan dan pertanian

Setakat ini, saya sudah melaburkan kira-kira RM60,000 bagi membeli lembu baka dan ia termasuk kos operasi yang sebenarnya agak tinggi

### AHMAD ZIKRI

terdedah dengan petbagai masalah kesihatan dan perlu diberi vaksin serta pematuan. Jika tidak, kematian akan berlaku. Setakat ini, saya bersyukur tidak berlaku lagi lembu yang diserang penyakit," katanya. Ahmad Zikri berkata, walaupun menjadi penternak lembu yang mengambil masa untuk dijual kepada pembeli, tetapi ia sesuatu perkara

yang menyeronokkan jika pandai mengatur strategi. "Saya adalah jurufoto yang tidak gemar bekerja makan gaji, jadi bidang perniagaan sudah tentu menjadi pilihan. "Apabila mesemidi bidang penternakan ini, saya melihat ia adalah suatu perniagaan yang sebenarnya menarik untuk diterokai. Cuma kita perlu sabar," katanya. Katanya, perkara paling utama untuk menyertai bidang ini adalah minat kerana jika tidak mempunyai minat segala perkara yang dusahakan tidak menjadi. "Perkara kedua, pastinya ilmu yang kita perlu dapatkan daripada petbagai pihak berpengalaman supaya usaha yang dilakukan tidak sia-sia. Kemudian, perlu menguruskan penternakan ini memberi satu pulangan dalam bentuk pendapatan. Apa yang saya lakukan ialah mengumpul modal terdahulu menerusi pembaharuan dalam bidang "trading". Walaupun tidaklah untung begitu besar, saya dapat mempelajari rantau dalam perniagaan itu terlebih dahulu," katanya.

Jelasnya, fillet ialah menternak lembu pedaging secara sendas berkurung dengan memberi makanan bermutu, air secukupnya dan mengemukakan lembu dalam masa yang singkat. "Setakat ini, saya sudah melaburkan kira-kira RM60,000 bagi membeli lembu baka dan ia termasuk kos operasi yang sebenarnya agak tinggi. "Ini kerana kos makanan terutama jenis dedak yang harganya agak tinggi di pasaran. Jadi, selain daripada memberi dedak, saya juga memberi

makanan jenis jerami, silaj napier, silaj batang jagung," katanya. Katanya, makanan menjadi perkara paling penting dalam penternakan lembu pedaging kerana ia memberi pengaruh kepada tumbesaran haiwan berkenaan. "Jika lembu kurus, pastinya harga jualannya tidaklah tinggi. Jadi, saya perlu memastikan lembu yang dimiliki sentiasa mempunyai makanan mencukupi. "Malah, lembu juga



MAKANAN adalah perkara penting untuk kesihatan lembu.



KEADAAN persekitaran kandang sentiasa dipantau



MEMASTIKAN keadaan lembu sentiasa sihat



MENTERNAK lembu pedaging di dalam kandang mudanya

# 'Baru pukul 8, semua sudah habis'

Oleh **NUR NAZLINA NADZARI**  
dan **NOOR HASLIZA NUSI**  
[uluan@www.mediaindonesia.com.my](mailto:uluan@www.mediaindonesia.com.my)

**ARAU:** Perantau yang pulang ke kampung halaman menyambut Aidilfitri, selepas dua tahun 'terperuk' di kediaman masing-masing ekoran penularan Covid-19, memberi seribu satu nikmat kepada golongan peniaga setempat.

Ini kerana hasil jualan mereka mendapat sambutan luar biasa termasuk bekalan ayam segar, kuih-muih dan nasi lemak.

Dalam tinjauan *Mingguan Malaysia* di Arau, Perlis, permintaan ayam yang tinggi pada minggu perayaan Aidilfitri menyebabkan bekalan 'licin' seawal 8 pagi, sekali gus menyebabkan ramai pelanggan pulang dengan tangan kosong.

Seorang peniaga ayam di pasar Simpang Empat, Rahmah Abdul, 73, berkata, pelanggan sudah mula menyerbu pasar dan beratur bagi mendapatkan ayam seawal pukul 7 pagi.

Katanya, mereka yang datang lewat sudah tidak dapat membeli kerana kebanyakan ayam ditempah lebih awal oleh pelanggan.

Jelasnya, sebanyak 220 ekor ayam yang dijual habis dalam masa sejam atau dua jam.

Dia yang mula berniaga sejak kelmarin selepas menyambut Aidilfitri berkata, permintaan pada tahun ini agak luar biasa berbanding tahun-tahun sebelumnya.

Sementara itu, Mat Rozi Abdullah, 61, yang sudah 30 tahun berniaga ayam di pasar tersebut memberitahu, memandangkan permintaan yang tinggi, dia telah menyediakan sebanyak 1,000 ekor ayam semalam berbanding 600 ekor kelmarin.

Dalam pada itu di Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, peniaga nasi lemak dan kuih-muih tidak menyangka mereka boleh 'tutup kedai' awal.

Tinjauan *Mingguan Malaysia* di sekitar Bayan Baru, Sungai Ara dan Bayan Lepas menda-

pati, hanya tinggal bekas-bekas kosong di atas meja gerai di tepi jalan mahupun di kompleks makanan sekitar pukul 8.30 pagi.

Bukan setakat itu, sebilangan besar peniaga juga dilihat mula mengemas lebih awal berbanding hari kebiasaan iaitu pada pukul 10 hingga 11 pagi.

Pemilik gerai Kuih Station di Astaka Pasar Awam Bayan Baru, Afandi Puteh, 59, berkata, kira-kira 400 bungkus nasi lemak serta 200 jenis kuih-muih habis dijual dalam masa sejam gerai dibuka.

Peniaga roti canai di Kompleks Makanan Rajawali, Aiman Rozaini, 20, pula berkata, kira-kira 100 keping roti canai dijual sekitar pukul 8.30 pagi semalam.

"Memang tak sangka sebab kami baru memulakan perniagaan pada hari raya setelah bercuti panjang sejak Ramadan lalu. Tempahan bukan sahaja diterima daripada pelanggan yang hadir ke kedai, malah menerusi aplikasi penghantaran makanan sejak awal pagi," jelasnya.



**MAT Rozi Abdullah** memotong ayam yang sudah ditempah oleh pelanggan di Pasar Simpang Empat, Arau, Perlis. - MINGGUAN/NAZLINA NADZARI