

# AI humans – South Korea

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.agriculture.poultry/2006–02/msg00270.html>

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<http://times.hankooki.com/1page/nation/200602/kt2006022417104011950.htm>  
1st Human Bird Flu Case Confirmed By Kim Tong–hyung Staff Reporter

A quarantine worker, involved in the slaughtering and burying of bird flu infected birds, talks on his mobile phone at a chicken farm in Chonan, South Chungchong Province in this Jan. 28, 2004 file photo. A bird flu outbreak that hit Korea in December 2003 forced health authorities to slaughter 5.3 million chickens at 19 poultry farms around the country, resulting in an economic loss of about 1 trillion won.

Health authorities confirmed Friday that four quarantine workers have been infected with the bird flu virus around 2003. It is the first time that human infections of the disease were reported in the country.

According to the state–run Korea Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the four workers, who were involved in the slaughtering of dead poultry dead poultry from 2003 to 2004 when the bird flu virus hit parts of the country, have tested positive for avian influenza.

The agency learned of their infection after their blood samples underwent more accurate testing in the United States. However, none of the four suffered flu–like symptoms or any other illnesses believed to have been related to bird flu infection, the agency said.

The agency plans to hold a press briefing at the ministry later in the day to further elaborate on the case.

South Korea was hit by bird flu between December 2003 and March 2004, requiring 5.3 million poultry to be destroyed at the financial cost of about 1 trillion (\$956 million) won.

The H5N1 strain of the virus has killed at least 72 people in Asia countries of Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam since late 2003. Korean health authorities had been on high alert over a possible bird flu epidemic after outbreaks of the disease were recently reported in neighboring countries such as China, Russia and Mongolia.

The bird flu virus, previously limited to Southeast Asia, was found among migratory birds in China, Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia last summer. Global concerns over bird flu outbreaks have been increasing with several cases being reported in Turkey and Eastern Europe, which are winter destination for birds migrating from Asia.

The bird flu virus, also called avian influenza, results from a type of virus in birds loosely related to the influenza virus in humans. Some strains of the virus are capable of crossing the species barrier from birds to humans, creating a new subtype that is highly lethal in humans.

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Jill Bowis

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