

# Poultry Industry Addresses Concerns on Avian Flu

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*L-R Dr. S K R Amarasekera, Director General, Department of Animal Production & Health; H W Cyril, Professor of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya; Dr. D D Wanasinghe, Chairman, All Island Poultry Association; Tang Beng Chuan, CEO, Prima Ceylon Limited and S Kodikara, Executive Director, Cargills Ceylon.*

Stakeholders in the Poultry Industry addressed the media on the concerns about Avian Flu and the impact it may have on the country's poultry industry. Since the detection of Avian flu in India, there is a growing concern about the outbreak of the disease in Sri Lanka.

Dr. S K R Amarasekera, Director General, Department of Animal Production and Health stated that there are comprehensive control measures in place to prevent entry into Sri Lanka.

"All imports of poultry products into the country have been banned. We have also banned the import of maize from India since the recent outbreaks there;" Dr. Amarasekera stated.

"Sri Lanka is prepared for a possible outbreak, although it is very unlikely. Hospitals have modern equipment, diagnostic and intensive care facilities as well as protective gear for the staff to combat the outbreak successfully;" he added.

Speaking on the safety of processed chicken products Prof. H W Cyril, Professor of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya stated that there is no evidence

that contamination of avian flu can occur through the consumption of chicken and other poultry products.

“The virus is not spread from well cooked chicken. The high temperature used by Sri Lankans while cooking kills the virus. Even the WHO has confirmed that eating cooked chicken is safe;’ Prof. Cyril stated.

V R Page, Deputy Chairman/ Managing Director, Cargills and Dr. D D Wanasinghe, Chairman, All Island Poultry Association were also present at the event. The Cargill’s Group organized the press conference.