



**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**

No: 03

Series of 2024

**SUBJECT: DECLARATION OF BENGUET AS AVIAN INFLUENZA FREE PROVINCE**

**WHEREAS**, the Province of Benguet had recorded eleven (11) confirmed cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 which was confirmed through laboratory testing using RT-PCR. The cases were detected in the city of Baguio and the municipalities of Atok, Buguias, Itogon, La Trinidad, Sablan, and Tublay on various dates of February, March, May, June, July, and September 2022 affecting duck, native chicken, chicken layer, gamefowl, culled broiler breeder, turkey, and goose.

**WHEREAS**, upon detection of the disease, the Provincial Government of Benguet and the concerned city and municipal government, in coordination with Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office CAR (DA RFO CAR) and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), conducted disease investigation, immediate depopulation, cleaning and disinfection, movement restrictions and surveillance in the affected premises following the Avian Influenza Protection Program (AIPP) guidelines;

**WHEREAS**, continued disease monitoring and surveillance in the 1-km and 7-km surveillance zones surrounding the affected farms yielded negative test results for influenza type A virus;


**WHEREAS**, Article 10.4.6. of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2022) provides that the Avian Influenza free status of a previously free country or zone may be regained after a minimum period of 28 days after a stamping-out policy has been completed; disinfection of the last affected establishment was carried out and that consequent surveillance demonstrated the absence of infection;

**WHEREAS**, prior to the confirmation of the first case of HPAI H5N1 in Benguet, the province had been free from avian influenza in poultry and through the joint efforts of the LGU, DARFO, and BAI applying effective disease control measures such as stamping out, cleaning and disinfection operations, biosecurity and other quarantine activities, the risk of further spread from infected premises were effected without delay;

**WHEREAS**, more than ninety (90) days have elapsed since the end of the cleaning and disinfection operations and that surveillance activities yielded negative AI test results;

**NOW THEREFORE, I, FRANCISCO P. TIU LAUREL JR.**, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, in accordance with the authority vested in me, do hereby declare Benguet as Avian Influenza Free Province.

Done this 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.

  
**FRANCISCO P. TIU LAUREL JR.**  
Secretary *K*



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