



## **Human and Veterinary Vaccine Manufacturers Work Together on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness**

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The human and veterinary vaccine industries have unique complementary roles in preventing influenza infection in both people and animals, and are committed to work together (via their relevant international associations – see below for more details) to assist the global community to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

Avian influenza occurs in birds throughout the world and, in its milder form, often goes unnoticed with few symptoms. However, the highly pathogenic form of avian influenza is characterized by a sudden onset, with high mortality in infected domestic poultry. It is this highly pathogenic form that presents a great risk of creating a human pandemic due the potential of the virus to transfer to people, either directly following a mutation or through combination with a human influenza virus in an intermediate animal host.

Pathogenic avian influenza can cause serious illness and death in humans, as has been seen in a number of countries in Asia and elsewhere, following H5N1 virus outbreaks in domestic poultry flocks. Therefore, a serious pandemic threat results from the potential adaptation of this avian H5N1 virus into a form that can be transferred from human to human.

With domestic poultry playing a crucial role in the exposure of humans to the H5N1 virus, it is obvious that control of the disease in poultry will reduce the risk to humans as well. Highly efficacious vaccines that prevent H5N1 infections in poultry are already available and may be used as a component of a comprehensive control strategy, together with surveillance, bio-security and the culling of infected birds. However, vaccination of poultry alone cannot be used to replace other control measures. Vaccination is a tool that supports the prevention of disease in poultry, securing the food supply, and also helps to limit the potentially dangerous transmission of the virus from poultry to humans.

The WHO recently published a [“Global pandemic influenza action plan to increase \[human\] vaccine supply”](#) (WHO/IVB/06.13). In order to meet anticipated gaps in pandemic influenza vaccine supply for human use, the WHO recommends increases in seasonal vaccine use, increases in production capacity, and further research and development of more potent and effective vaccines. Industry is participating in all these areas, including as an active member in public-private-partnerships. For shorter-term capacity increases, it is of paramount importance that demand for seasonal vaccine increases substantially to promote further investments in processing plants for human influenza vaccine.

The WHO proposed that an analysis should be conducted into the feasibility of converting veterinary vaccine production facilities to produce human influenza vaccines. Both human and animal vaccine industries discussed these options with the WHO in Geneva in April 2006, and concluded that such a conversion cannot be recommended for a number of reasons:

- The use of veterinary vaccine facilities potentially offers only a limited number of additional doses to those produced by human vaccine manufacturers.
- The purification capacity for these human vaccines will still be a limiting factor.
- Loss of veterinary vaccine production capacity would jeopardize disease control in birds, thereby increasing the risk of faster spread of the disease in animals, and resulting in a higher risk of infection for humans.

The human and veterinary vaccine industries are committed to ensuring a synergistic approach to preventing an influenza pandemic. The industries meet regularly to share the latest developments within their specific areas of expertise and research. This is designed to help the industries make appropriate decisions on the next steps that are needed to be taken to maximize their contributions to global pandemic preparedness. The overall goal is to reduce the threat an influenza pandemic poses to the global community.

The **International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)** is the organization representing pharmaceutical, biotechnology and vaccine companies and their industry associations around the world. The **IFPMA Influenza Vaccine Supply – International Task Force (IFPMA IVS ITF)** was established in 2002 to provide governments and intergovernmental bodies with expert opinions and advice from research-based vaccine manufacturers that are developing vaccines to combat both seasonal and pandemic influenza (<http://www.ifpma.org/influenza>).

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The **International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH)** is the international association representing companies engaged in the research, development, manufacturing and marketing of veterinary medicines, including vaccines (<http://www.ifahsec.org>). IFAH member companies help to prevent and control avian influenza by developing and supplying vaccines, and providing expertise and advice, in partnership with governments and other organizations.

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