

The Telegraph

Chickens genetically modified to stop bird flu

Chickens have been genetically modified to prevent them spreading potentially deadly bird flu.

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The British research may lead to ways of halting bird flu outbreaks within poultry stocks.

As well as protecting the health of poultry, it could reduce the risk of a killer pandemic among humans.

Bird, or avian, flu does not easily infect humans but when it does the effects can be serious - one strain, H5N1, has caused around 300 deaths since the mid-1990s and kills almost 80% of all those it infects.

Experts fear a mutated version of the virus that transmits easily from person to person could claim millions of victims around the world.

Dr Laurence Tiley, from Cambridge University, one of the scientists who carried out the new research, said: "Chickens are potential bridging hosts that can enable new strains of flu to be transmitted to humans. Preventing virus transmission in chickens should reduce the economic impact of the disease and reduce the risk posed to people exposed to the infected birds.

[What is bird flu? \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3345329/What-is-bird-flu.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3345329/What-is-bird-flu.html)

[Genetically modified animals: Q&A](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/agriculture/geneticmodification/8423764/Genetically-modified-animals-questions-and-answers.html)

[\(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/agriculture/geneticmodification/8423764/Genetically-modified-animals-questions-and-answers.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/agriculture/geneticmodification/8423764/Genetically-modified-animals-questions-and-answers.html)

[China suspected of bird flu cover up \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/4510840/China-suspected-of-covering-up-bird-flu-outbreak.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/4510840/China-suspected-of-covering-up-bird-flu-outbreak.html)

[Risk of bird flu pandemic 'much greater than claimed' \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1560673/Risk-of-bird-flu-pandemic-greater-than-claimed.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1560673/Risk-of-bird-flu-pandemic-greater-than-claimed.html)

"The genetic modification we describe is a significant first step along the path to developing chickens that are completely resistant to avian flu."

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