New Strain of Avian Flu Causes Sudden Death of Ducks and Poultry

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YOGYAKARTA – It is indicated that the Avian Influenza (AI) epidemic attacking thousands of ducks in Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java is a new strain. The virus also attacked other poultry such as chickens and quails. Reports are found on the sudden death of broilers and backyard chicken in Sleman, Yogyakarta.

Virologist of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Universitas Gadjah Mada, Prof. drh. Widya Asmara, S.U., Ph.D., said that most of the sudden death of duck farming are indicated with AI virus sub-type H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1 although some are caused by Newcastle Disease (ND). In his opinion the virus clade is not the mutation of AI clade 2.1 virus already spreading in Indonesia. “The new virus entering Indonesia is confirmed,” said the professor to journalists on Tuesday, (26/12).

Although the virus already spread in 2010 in Nepal, then India, Bangladesh, China up to the Fukushima Japan in 2011, Widya confirmed the new virus entering Indonesia by the middle of the end of 2012. It is likely that the clade 2.3.2.1 virus was brought by wild birds migrating from Asia to Indonesian coastlines due to the winter in the north hemisphere. It is also possible that the virus came due to the undetected trade carrying AI between countries. Symptoms are weak body, frequent turning around, whitish eye like cataract, followed by sudden death.

According to Widya, the vaccines for the new strain is unavailable. Indonesian researchers are making new vaccines by doing isolate test, vaccine candidate test and cross-reaction with old vaccines. To prevent the spread of the virus, he recommended breeders and veterinary agencies to do limited culling of the poultry, decontamination, closer controlling of poultry trade from infected areas.
Up to 113,700 ducks are reported to have died suddenly due to AI in the past four months. Based on the data from the Veterinary Agency (BB Vet) in Yogyakarta, the death is similar in three provinces, Central Java, East Java, and Yogyakarta. The sudden death became epidemic spreading to other regions, culminating in December,” he said.

He said the number of ducks died due to AI is 64 thousands in Central Java in 23 regencies. In East Java it reaches up to 45 thousands in 20 regencies. In Yogyakarta, it is 4,700 in Kulonprogo, Bantul and Sleman regencies.

He said the AI virus attacking ducks in the three provinces is the new H5N1, which is clade 2.3.2.1. “Surely there is the old clade, which is 2.1, but many have been attacked by the new clade,” he confirmed.

He said that laboratory finding by BBVet showed that the ducks died due to AI of H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1, this virus is more virulent than the previous one, clade 2.1.

Chairman of Local Poultry Breeders, Ismartoyo, most of the poultry died due to the virus in Yogyakarta were from the coastlines. He wanted serious attention from government to address this issue.

He said the virus coming to Yogyakarta was from East Java because eggs supply for duck farming in Yogyakarta is from Blitar and Kediri in East Java. He said that breeders in Yogyakarta collect up to 8 tonnes of duck eggs from the two cities.
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