

Dear Mr. Li,

I am writing to you to question the government's approach to risk of contracting avian flu via contact with wild birds.

While I understand that the government needs to act decisively to minimise the risk of avian flu spreading to the human population the action taken to date appears designed to promulgate misguided and uninformed public misconceptions.

It is obvious from everything that we have seen that by far the greatest risk of catching avian flu is via contact with poultry (and thus is most likely in wet markets). Yet, the government has seen fit to close Mai Po and the Wetland Park despite the fact that no birds tested there have been shown to have H5N1.

The risk of members of the public coming into contact with wild birds at Mai Po is essentially zero - so why not open it again? People themselves can choose to go or not.

I (and many others I know are steering clear of wet markets since we rightly perceive the risk is there. I would much rather spend my spare time watching birds safely from a distance at Mai Po where my contact with birds is nil than take a risk (however low this is) in a market.

Sadly, from what I can see so far the government action taken to date has focused more on responding to public misconceptions rather than addressing the risks - its time that the government took the bold step of leading on this.

The government should immediately re-open Mai Po and carefully explain to the public why the risks are essentially nil.

I look forward to a positive response from you on this and following the Legco debate on Tuesday.

Regards,

Tim Woodward