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February 16, 2006 LB 856

disease--could begin. No one can predict when a pandemic might occur; however, experts from around the world are closely watching the H5N1 situation in both Asia and Europe very closely, and are preparing for the possibility that the virus may begin to spread more easily and widely from person to person. And I'll just...how much time do I have left? How much time do I have left?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator, about 1, 40.

SENATOR COMBS: Okay, good. Well, I have just a little bit more, then, I want to read into the record. The avian influenza A epizootic--that's an animal outbreak, epizootic--in Asia and parts of Europe is not expected to diminish significantly in the short term. It is likely that H5N1 infection among birds has become endemic in certain areas and that human infections resulting from direct contact with infected poultry will continue to occur. So far, the spread of H5N1 virus from person to person has been rare, has not continued beyond one person, but there is no evidence for genetic reassortment yet between human and avian influenza A virus genes; however, the epizootic...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR COMBS: ...in Asia continues to pose an important public health threat. And as we said before, little preexisting immunity to it exists in our population. One more point I wanted to make is that the cases that have spread to humans right now in Vietnam and Thailand does show resistance to the antiviral medications amantadine and rimantadine, two of the medications commonly used for the treatment of influenza. And again, when I was researching my "hep A" bill, those are the antivirals that are being stockpiled right now, and the scary thing is Vietnam and Thailand strains that have been found in humans are resistant to these. So it's extremely important we do all we can do to prevent the spread of the bird flu. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Combs. Senator Loudon, on FA449.