

Differing Opinions:

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Two Articles

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Module 4

Choose two news/current affairs texts, one from English-speaking media (e.g. a British or American TV news report, an Australian newspaper, etc.) and the other from a media outlet in another country/language, but both dealing with the same 'global' events (e.g., wars, disasters, etc.). Critically discuss the two texts using a CDA approach (unit 8).

You should reach conclusions as to how the two texts are similar or different in some or all of the following:

- the differences in the representation of events and in relations with the intended audience;
- the ways 'news values' influence the production of news;
- the underlying system of values/ideologies which shapes each report;
- implicit and explicit evaluations conveyed by the texts;
- the ways social actors are represented;
- the ways different linguistic codes represent the same events;
- the visual illustrations that accompany the texts – are they the same or different and the implications of the choices.

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1. Introduction

Language is an intrinsic part of life. The “nature and forms of [language] use are just as diverse as the areas of human activity” (Bakhtin 1999: 98). Language and human activities are regulated by social factors. These vary from country to country. It follows that the way in which language is used in different societies to portray similar events will also vary.

Jaworski and Coupland contend that “discourse is an inescapably important concept for understanding society and human responses to it, as well as for understanding language itself” (1999: 3). This paper will examine language and society by looking at the discourse in newspaper articles. Those that have been selected are:

1. *South Korea buries 1.4m pigs ALIVE in bid to eradicate foot and mouth disease* (appendix 1)
2. *Korea culls 1.3m livestock to combat FMD epidemic* (appendix 2)

Both articles deal with outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and H5N1 Avian Flu in South Korea. The first article was written by the *Daily Mail* in the United Kingdom, and the second is by the *Korea Herald* in South Korea.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

The two texts will be analysed through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Norman Fairclough’s (2003) CDA framework will be used to examine the two texts. This looks at grammar and vocabulary selection as well as the social factors affecting language choice and application.

All texts are written from a specific viewpoint. Critical Discourse Analysis challenges the positions of the writers. Fowler equates it to a challenge of “common sense by pointing out that something could have been represented some other way, with a very different significance” (1996: 4). Common sense can be viewed as an aggregate of our social experiences. Therefore, it will change from culture to culture. Fowler’s idea of a challenge to common sense can also be viewed as removing the reader from their social perspective, or viewing it from another culture’s perspective.

One of the main theorists behind CDA is Norman Fairclough. His CDA framework looks at two main structures in discourse; internal relations and external relations. Internal relations are how the vocabulary and grammar is used within a text. This is further broken down into three “types of meaning” (Fairclough 2003: 27). These are identified under the categories of action, representation and identification.

Action describes the text format, such as interrogative, declarative, persuasive or implicative. Representation involves the descriptions of people, places or actions. An example of this can be seen in the many news stories that followed the shooting of U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in 2011. Her husband was represented in the media in ways such as “Mark Kelley”, “Commander Kelley”, “Astronaut Mark E. Kelley”, “the congresswoman’s husband”, or “her grieving husband”. Identification relates to the representations used by the writers to get an overall picture of the intent of the text. Fairclough states that “focusing analysis of texts on the interplay of Action, Representation and Identification brings a social perspective into the heart and fine detail of the text” (ibid.).

Fairclough’s category of external factors comprises the social effects and personal beliefs of the authors. These determine the choice of what language is used to make a statement. By performing a CDA, “we can unlock the ideologies and recover the social meanings expressed in discourse” (Teo 2000: 11). The addition of the social aspect to the analysis is what sets CDA apart from critical linguistics and the other forms of examination that came before it. Fairclough breaks the external factors into three subcategories; social events, social practices and social structures.

Social events comprise actions that have been taken and are a function of social factors. Each of the social events examined in this paper are newspaper articles. These events have been formed in large part by two other external factors that have been identified by Fairclough. Social practices are actions taken in social situations. Examples of this are teaching, arguing and discussing. Fairclough defines social structures as “very abstract entities... defining a potential, a set of possibilities” (2003: 23). These can be understood

to be the overall edifices in which the social practices take place. Social structures comprise systems such as democracy, Marxian economics or Catholicism.

3. The Texts

The first text (see appendix 1) is from the British middle market newspaper the *Daily Mail*. This newspaper is targeted towards the lower-middle and working classes in Britain (Bell 1991: 109). The second article (see appendix 2) is from the *Korea Herald*. This is one of several English language newspapers in Korea that is targeted towards an international audience in South Korea.

Neither text lists an author. The *Korea Herald* article makes no mention of an author at all, and the *Daily Mail* article merely states “Daily Mail Reporter” (2011: 1). This is most likely due to the way most articles are created in newsrooms. Bell notes that virtually all news articles will have been written or edited by twelve or more people (1991: 33). Figure one shows how articles are typically generated in a small newsroom.

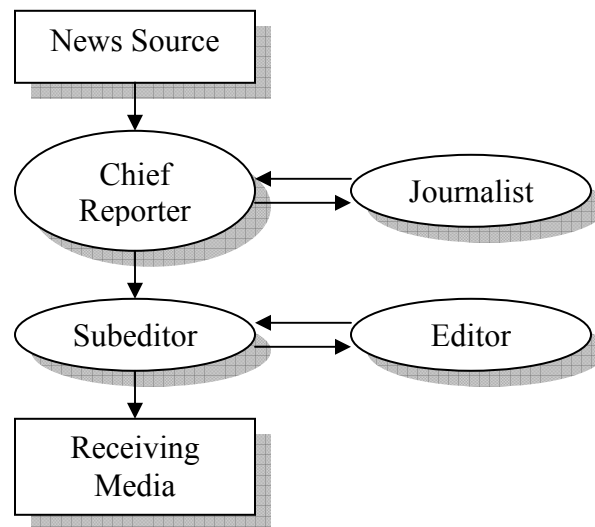


Figure 1: path of a news story in a small newsroom (Bell 1991: 35)

For larger newspaper outlets, further editors will be involved in the creation process. In addition, each time a story is transmitted from one newsroom to another; it goes through the entire process again (Bell 1991: 47).

Each newspaper has its own slant or style. This will take into account the readers they wish to attract. The writers are expected to fit their articles to the newspaper's style. At each step in the editing process the reporters, journalists and editors are checking that the article fits within these parameters.

4. Internal Relations

While the two articles deal with the same issue of animal disease in South Korea, they are handled very differently. The following sections will look at the differences between the articles in terms of Fairclough's internal relations.

4.1. Action

Action relates the text to the event (Fairclough 2003: 27). Essentially, this is determining what the text is doing. Since the two selected articles are both news stories reporting a series of events, the structure of all of the clauses are declarative. The difference between them is in the representations of the events.

4.2. Representation

Representation relates the text to the rest of the world (Fairclough 2003: 27). The articles have chosen specific information to represent the events the way the writers want it to be seen.

4.2.1. Vocabulary

The most obvious way in which they differ is the way the headlines are used to lead into the story. "In newspapers the *headline* and the *lead* (the first paragraph of the text), in most cases, fulfil the dual function of the abstract and the orientation. For all periodical articles, "the lead is the most important paragraph of the story" (Caldas-Coulthard 1996: 257). The *Daily Mail* article begins with "South Korea buries 1.4m pigs ALIVE in bid to eradicate foot and mouth disease" (2011: 1). The reader forms a picture of the events in a very brief span of time. The use of caps also lends drama to their headline. By contrast, the *Korea Herald* headline reads "Korea culls 1.3m livestock to combat FMD epidemic"

(2011: 1). The use of the verb “combat” gives the reader the sense that there is a problem, but somebody is doing something to fix it, thus reducing the impact.

The *Korea Herald* representation of events greatly differs from the *Daily Mail* article in what it does not represent. There is no mention of how the animals are being culled. The only language that mentions animals being buried is the phrase “culling and burial” (*Korea Herald* 2011: 1). This gives the impression that the animals are first culled, and then buried. In all other instances, the article mentions the animals are being “culled” or “destroyed” with no mention of the methods used. The different vocabulary used in the two articles can be seen in Table one.

<i>Korean Herald</i>		<i>Daily Mail</i>	
vocabulary	times used	vocabulary	times used
cull	6	cull	4
culling and burial	1	bury alive	2
destroyed	2	controversial measure	1
		horrendous practice	1
		throwing pigs into pits	1
		and burying them alive	
		slaughtered	1

Table 1: vocabulary explaining the culling of animals

In contrast, to the *Korea Herald*, the main point in the *Daily Mail* article is how the animals are culled. The article specifically mentions pigs being buried alive on three separate occasions. This is further represented as a “controversial measure” and a “horrendous practice”. This clearly states that this is a method of culling animals that many people will take issue with.

In addition to not mentioning how the animals are being treated, the *Korea Herald* article uses different language to discuss the vaccination of the animals. It simply states that “all cattle and breeding sows... are being vaccinated” (2011: 1). The reader is led to believe that the controlling agencies are equipped to complete the vaccination. This gives a different representation than the *Daily Mail*, which notes that “the government will

import more vaccines to cover 11 million livestock. Before the outbreak, South Korea only had 300,000 doses” (2011: 1). This is stating that the country is not currently able to control the problem.

When looking at the language in the articles that have negative connotations, another trend emerges. Table two lists the vocabulary with negative implications. Vocabulary that is found in both texts, or is involved in the culling of animals has not been included.

<i>Korea Herald</i>		<i>Daily Mail</i>	
vocabulary	times used	vocabulary	times used
losses	2	controversial	1
severest	1	battling	1
insufficient	1	alert level	1
damage	1	rapidly-spreading	1
disrupt	1	storm of criticism	1
concerns	1	appalled	1
dying	1	fear	1
barred	1	mutate	1
virulent strain	1	killing	1
highly contagious disease	1	contrary	1

Table 2: vocabulary with negative connotations

The *Korea Herald* article’s language does not disavow the fact that there is a problem, but it uses softer language that portrays concern. It talks about factors such as economic “losses”, or that this disease will “damage” and “disrupt” the agricultural industry (2011: 1). This language is enough to raise concern in the readers, but there is little to connect the reader to the actions.

The *Daily Mail* article’s language is stronger, and portrays a more urgent picture. The reader is informed of a raise in “alert level”, and warned that the problem is “rapidly spreading” (2011: 1). This language connects the reader to the article, and gives the impression that they may be negatively affected by the disease. This article further raises

reader concerns with the use of “fear”, “mutate” and “killing” (2011: 3) in reference to the avian flu virus. These are strong words that are used to further raise apprehensions.

4.2.2. Quoted Sources

Another area of divergence between the two articles is the sources that are quoted. Caldas-Coulthard notes that “The reporter only reports those parts of the exchange that are significant for him/her according to his/her view of the world” (1994: 298). The *Daily Mail* article cites two sources for direct quote. The first source is a prepared statement from the Korean agriculture ministry. Korean sources are only cited once in the three page article about South Korea, which is not enough to show all of the information they would like to be represented. The second source is “Joyce D’Silva, Director of Public Affairs for CIFW [Compassion in World Farming]”. Using the full name and job title gives the second quoted source more emphasis, and it is from here that the strongest language about the culled animals comes. This second source is quoted three times. By giving people opposed to the measures taken three times the coverage that is given to sources dealing with the problem, it gives the opposition arguments more strength.

The *Korea Herald* article gives indirect quotes from “The Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries”, “the ministry”, “authorities” and one direct quote from “an official” (2011: 1). There are no citations from any people or groups opposed to the culling of the animals. Using direct and indirect quotes gives weight to the arguments that the authors are making (Caldas-Coulthard 1994: 303). By giving quotes only from official sources, the *Korea Herald* is acting as a mouthpiece for those agencies. Only the information the government officials wanted people to receive has been reported.

4.2.3. Representation of Location

The second issue dealt with in both articles is the concurrent, yet unrelated issue of an avian flu outbreak in the country. Both articles give similar facts, mentioning that a variety of farmed birds have been culled to contain the problem. The most notable divergence between the two is how they represent the historical data of issues with the

disease. The *Daily Mail* ends its discussion by mentioning that “most of the [human avian flu] deaths have been in Asia” (2011: 3). This gives the impression that Korea has dealt with this issue in the past. The *Korea Herald* by comparison notes that “there has never been a case of a Korean getting sick” (2011: 1). This downplays the seriousness of the disease, and serves to calm any fears the readers may have. The *Korea Herald* representation of human cases distances Korea from previous issues, while the *Daily Mail* article relates the two.

4.3. Identification

The previous sections have shown how the two articles represented the events and social actors. The representations in the texts identify the viewpoints of the authors, or as Fairclough argues, “what people commit themselves to in texts is an important part of how they identify themselves, the texturing of identities” (2003: 164). This section will use the representations to extrapolate ideologies of the writers.

4.3.1. The *Daily Mail*

The *Daily Mail* article opens with a headline that grabs the reader’s attention with the use of caps on the word “ALIVE” to accent the statement, followed by a lead paragraph that paraphrases it. The paragraphs that follow appear, initially, to be narrative. A closer assessment shows that the writers have taken an evaluative stance, as seen in the second sentence: “The controversial measure has been brought in after 115 cases of the disease were confirmed, originating in the city of Andong” (*Daily Mail* 2011: 1). Francis notes that “a retrospective label serves to **encapsulate** or package a stretch of discourse... it is *presented as equivalent* to the clause or clauses it replaces” (1994: 85). This means that the anaphoric use of the phrase “controversial measure” serves as the author’s evaluation of the way in which the animals are being culled.

The article further evaluates the situation through its use of quotes. As stated previously, the writer has used more quotes from an organisation that is opposed to the way the animals are culled. The use of these direct quotes fuses “the authorial voice with the reported voice, making the boundaries between the two unnoticeable to the reader” (Li

2009: 107). By giving voice to the quote “we urge the Korean government to end this horrendous practice at once and to ensure that, if animals are culled, this is done humanely” (*Daily Mail* 2011: 2) the writer is taking the stance that this is the correct course of action. One of the reasons the writer is doing this is because “the combination of reporting and condemning is a commercial formula adopted by the press to attract more readers” (Caldas-Coulthard 1996: 268). All newspapers try to attract as many readers to their product as they can. Criticism of the actions taken in South Korea is the choice taken by this writer to approach the topic.

The writer returns to declarative narration to describe the bird flu situation in South Korea. At the end of the article, three sentences are added about the possible human health concerns. It cites unnamed health experts that “fear the disease could mutate to a form that could easily be transmitted to humans” (*Daily Mail* 2011: 3). This is followed by past human fatalities from the same disease. By ending this topic with these statements, the writer is raising the readers concerns.

4.3.2. The *Korea Herald*

The *Korea Herald* article is laid out differently from that of the *Daily Mail*. Whereas the British newspaper goes back and forth between the topics of H5N1 and FMD, the *Korea Herald* deals with FMD first, and then moves on to H5N1. It methodically lays out the two topics, dealing with them in turn. There is a clear narration of the events, with little overt evaluation or opinion involved.

Only official sources are attributed in the article. Almost every paragraph in the article makes reference to, or cites a source from the “government”, “ministry” or “authorities”. This has the result of skewing the information towards what the government wishes to be presented to the public. In effect, the article is the mouthpiece for government officials.

For the issue of FMD, the article states “quarantine officials ordered the culling of [animals]” and “the government started vaccinating animals on Dec. 25” (*Korea Herald* 2011: 1). In both of these statements, it refers to what the government has already done

to address the issue. The only negative aspects are related to the economy. The article makes mention of “cost of losses”, and farmers needing to “re-stock on animals” (ibid.). By not mentioning any issues with lack of vaccines, or not having the capability of humanely culling animals, the article gives the impression that all of the issues are being dealt with, or have already been resolved.

The H5N1 issue is dealt with in the same manner as FMD. By declaring that “front-line inspectors will carefully monitor birds” and birds are being culled to “prevent the spread of bird flu” (*Korea Herald 2011: 2*) the article is lowering any concerns the reader may have. To understand why the writers have presented only the government’s information, we must turn to the external factors affecting the text.

5. External Relations

To fully understand a text, one must examine the social relations that control its formation. This is a collaborative relationship. External factors affect the ways in which texts are written. In turn, the texts will reinforce the same social elements that shaped them.

5.1. Social Practices

Fairclough explains social practices as “intermediate organizational entities between structures and events” (2003: 23). The social practice here is newspaper writing. The goal is to create a product that readers will wish to purchase. The newspapers will have done research on their readers. This information guides the editing process to sculpt the final product into something their readers want. The headlines are examples of this. They have both been clearly written to attract readers to the products. Many people will respond to the headline by becoming curious about the topic, and be drawn to the product.

5.2. Social Structures

The most pertinent structure to the two articles is nationalism, or the feeling of national identity. Nationalism is created and fostered by thoughts and ideas that are reproduced on a daily basis. Billing refers to this as ‘banal nationalism’ (cited in Li 2009: 86).

Newspapers are a perfect conduit for the reproduction of these ideas, because articles are printed everyday that are shaped in some part by nationalism. There are a number of examples throughout the texts that show this.

When analyzing the *Korea Herald* article, it is important to remember the target audience. This is not a paper aimed at Korean citizens, but at foreigners. To maintain nationalistic pride, the foreign community is not informed of the way in which the animals are treated. This is a common theme in South Korea. Foreigners are not told about any perceived negative aspects of Korean culture. Korean news outlets reported on this issue, and discussed the culling as inhumane, but only in articles and reports done in Korean. Articles that could be easily accessed by foreigners treated it like the *Korea Herald* article, or mentioned it in a less opinionated way than the *Daily Mail* article. By not informing foreigners of the actions, there is less of a negative impact on national pride.

Another way this article reinforces nationalism is by mentioning that “there has never been a case of a Korean getting sick [from bird flu]” (2011: 1). Koreans are very proud of this fact. This stems from the belief that one of Korea’s national foods, kimchi, cures bird flu and other diseases. This is commonly reported in the news during flu season (Chazan 2005, Silverman 2005, Korea Herald 2010). Since kimchi is a major part of Korean cuisine, and a part of the Korean identity, it was important for the writers of this article to mention that this is a disease that has not affected Koreans.

Nationalism is important to the *Daily Mail* article for different reasons. Hall views national culture as “a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves” (cited in Li 2009: 85-86). The article attacks the manner in which the animals are culled, partly because it invokes the reaction that this is something that British people would not do. Burying animals alive is viewed as something that would not occur in British culture. Pride is generated because only people from other cultures perpetrate these horrible acts. This idea can further be seen by the way the article uses multimodal discourse.

6. Multimodal Discourse

When performing a CDA, it is increasingly important to include any visual images the text might contain (Fairclough 1999: 146) because the images used will alter the reader's perception of events. The *Korea Herald* piece does not include any images, but the *Daily Mail* article includes three that can be analysed.

One factor affecting perception of an image is the distance from which the objects are being viewed. Kress and Van Leeuwen define six distances when discussing people:

1. Intimate distance – can view the head only
2. Close personal distance – can view head and shoulders
3. Far personal distance – can see the person from the waist up
4. Close social distance – can see the entire person
5. Far social distance – the person is viewed ‘with space around [them]’
6. Public distance – four or five people can be viewed

(adapted from 1999: 370)

The first picture (*Daily Mail* 2011: 1) shows a veterinarian vaccinating a cow at a far social distance. Photographs taken at this distance connect the reader with the action taking place in the picture. The reader's connection reinforces the idea that this is how the situation should be handled. The third picture used in the article (*Daily Mail* 2011: 3) has a similar composition and subject matter, with the same meaning behind it.

The second picture (*Daily Mail* 2011: 2) is very different from the others. The first main difference is that it was taken at a different time than the other photographs. It is a file photo taken during a similar event in 2002. It is implied that the same actions are occurring now, but the reader cannot be sure if this is a valid representation of current events. The second difference is that the workers are further away at a public distance. From this distance, people are seen “as having little connection with ourselves” (Grosser cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen 1999: 370). The reader's connection to the people in the photograph is further decreased by the angle at which it is taken. All of the action is viewed from an oblique angle. Any photographs taken at an angle detach the reader from

the act being viewed (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1999: 374). The photograph is of workers in the act of putting animals in a hole for burial. By removing the reader from the action in the picture, it reinforces the viewpoint that this is an act the writers do not connect with events that could happen in Britain. As Kress and Van Leeuwen put it;

The front angle says, as it were: ‘what you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with.’ The oblique angle says: ‘what you see here is *not* part of our world, it is *their* world, something we are not involved with’ (ibid.).

7. Conclusion

Discourse is unalterably linked to society. It is also “an inescapably important concept for understanding society and human responses to it, as well as for understanding language itself” (Jaworski and Coupland 1999: 3). The two articles handled the news differently because of the culture surrounding the people creating the message.

The *Daily Mail* article represented the events from a highly negative perspective. It used strong vocabulary and sources opposed to the measures to add opinion to an article that is portrayed as ‘hard news’. The writer used images to buttress the message that events like these would not happen in the United Kingdom.

The *Korea Herald* sought to allay public concerns. Its article mentioned few of the negative aspects of the story, or at least referred to them obliquely to show the situation in a better light. Its sources were attributed exclusively to government officials. This meant that the information was restricted only to that which the government wanted to be present. This action appears to have been taken to reduce fears in the foreign community, as well as to reduce a negative impact on national pride.

Through Critical Discourse Analysis, readers learn how criticism can be “brought to bear on objects of experience whose ‘objectivity’ is called into question; criticism supposes that there is a degree of inbuilt deformity which masquerades as reality” (Connerton cited in Fowler 1996: 4). This provides the reader with a framework to better understand and interpret texts and the news that is presented to them.

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Appendix 1:
Daily Mail

South Korea buries 1.4m pigs ALIVE in bid to eradicate foot and mouth disease

By DAILY MAIL REPORTER

South Korea has buried 1.4million pigs alive after an outbreak of foot and mouth disease on the peninsula.

The controversial measure has been brought in after 115 cases of the disease were confirmed, originating in the city of Andong.

The country is also battling an outbreak of avian flu and recently raised its alert level to 'watch' after discovering the virus at poultry farms in four provinces.



Outbreak: A vet vaccinates a cow against foot and mouth disease at a farm in Taean, South Korea

Slaughter houses have been asked to work on holidays to boost meat supply after the mass cull saw wholesale prices of beef, pork and chicken soared by 22 percent in the last month.

President Lee Myung-bak held an emergency cabinet meeting yesterday to discuss measures of containing the rapidly-spreading disease.

South Korea has already vaccinated 1.2million livestock against foot and mouth since November in eight of its 16 provinces. It nows plans to expand the programme across the country, except for Jeju Island.

A statement from the agriculture ministry said: 'Today's meeting reviewed current measures and decided to strengthen preemptive measures.'

The government will import more vaccines to cover 11 million livestock. Before the outbreak, South Korea only had 300,000 doses.



FLASHBACK: South Korean quarantine officers throw live piglets, taken from a farm suffering from an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, into a hole prior to burying them alive in Ansong, in this 2002 file photo

The cull - 10 per cent of the total number of pigs and cattle - has sparked a storm of criticism.

Joyce D'Silva, Director of Public Affairs for CIWF said: 'Compassion in World Farming is appalled that the Republic of Korea is allegedly throwing pigs into pits and burying them alive.'

'This is totally contrary to international guidelines on humane culling, which the Korean government endorsed five years ago.'

'We urge the Korean government to end this horrendous practice at once and to ensure that, if animals are culled, this is done humanely.'

Foot and mouth affects livestock including sheep, cows and pigs. Meat from infected animals is not harmful to humans. The H5N1 avian influenza virus has been confirmed in 16 cases where it was suspected.



Precautions: More than one million pigs have been buried alive after 115 cases of the disease were found on the peninsula

Some 470,000 poultry have been slaughtered, 0.4 per cent of the domestic stock, and commercial duck and chicken breeding farms in affected areas have been quarantined.

The outbreak was first confirmed on December 31 in ducks in the city of Cheonan and chickens in Iksan.

No human cases of the bird flu strain have been reported.

Agriculture Minister Yoo Jeong-bok has formed a national team to contain the spread of the disease. The outbreak is believed to have been brought to the peninsula by migratory birds.

Health experts fear the disease could mutate to a form that could be easily transmitted between humans.

Since 2003, the H5N1 strain of bird flu has infected around 500 people globally, killing nearly 60 per cent. Most of the deaths have been in Asia.

South Korea has said it has no plans to boost imports or cut import duties to cope with the shortage.

It imposes 40 per cent tariffs on imported beef, and around 25 per cent of tariffs on imported pork.

Korea culls 1.3m livestock to combat FMD epidemic

Korea has ordered the culling of 1.34 million livestock since late November to stem its severest foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in history, the government said Monday.

The Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said quarantine officials ordered the culling of 107,500 heads of cattle, just under 1.23 million pigs and over 3,700 goats and deer on 3,300 farms in the past 40 days.

The exact cost of losses cannot be calculated properly, but compensation to farmers, the cost of vaccinations and other expenses may run past the 1.3 trillion won mark, although numbers can go up if the outbreaks do not come under control soon, the ministry said.

Besides the culling and burial of animals, the government started vaccinating animals on Dec. 25, with 2.15 million livestock in six provinces and two major cities getting shots. All cattle and breeding sows in the central Gyeonggi, Chungcheong and Gangwon provinces as well as those in the city of Incheon, west of Seoul, are being vaccinated.

Sources said losses will require the use of the government's emergency budget since existing reserves and farm-related public funds accumulated in the past are insufficient to deal with the extent of the damage.

"Because farms that have been hit will have to re-stock on animals afterwards, the latest FMD outbreak may disrupt the local livestock sector for up to two years," an insider said.

Before the first FMD case was confirmed on Nov. 29, the country had 3.4 million heads of cattle, 9.4 million pigs and a considerable number of other livestock.

The ministry, meanwhile, said it found four more outbreaks earlier in the day, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 112, along with several other cases that are not officially tallied because the animals were culled as a precautionary measure before test results were checked.

The ministry also confirmed the first bird flu outbreak in the Gyeonggi region near Seoul, raising concerns that the highly contagious disease is spreading across the country.

A duck farm in Anseong, 77 kilometers south of Seoul, tested positive for the virulent strain of the H5N1 avian influenza after birds started dying off over the weekend, the ministry said.

The case is the first to be reported in the province surrounding the capital city in nearly three years. Avian influenza is an airborne disease that can be transmitted to humans, although there has never been a case of a Korean getting sick.

Authorities said the Anseong outbreak is the ninth confirmed in the country this winter after the first bird flu cases were confirmed by quarantine authorities on Dec. 31.

The initial outbreaks were all centered in the Jeolla region in the southwestern part of the country and South Chungcheong in the central western region.

"All 32,000 ducks on the (Anseong) farm have already been ordered destroyed on Sunday as a

precautionary measure, with 55,000 other birds within a 500-meter radius to be culled," an official said.

He said other birds within a 10-kilometer area of the poultry farm will be barred from being sold on the market or moved, while front-line inspectors will carefully monitor birds for sharp hikes in sudden deaths and drops in egg production.

The ministry, meanwhile, said the latest confirmation brings the number of birds culled at infected farms alone to over 194,600, with many more being destroyed to prevent the spread of the bird flu.

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