



EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES • FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A milestone for FETPV

Say hello to the first batch of graduates from the Field Epidemiology Training Programme for Veterinarians

CONTENTS

RAP
FETPV 2011
milestones... 2

India
Study tour... 3

India
To New Zealand,
to study... 3

China
One Health event... 3

Thailand
What Pon Pon and
Htun Htun did last
summer... 4

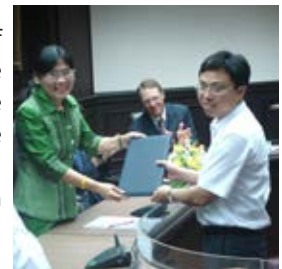
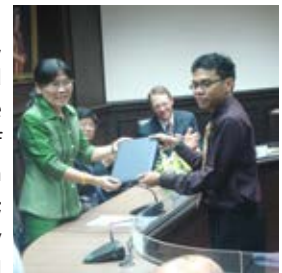
June 6 this year was a landmark day for the students and faculty of an educational program that has been going on since 2008 — the first batch of graduates of the ground-breaking Regional Field Epidemiology Training Programme for Veterinarians (FETPV) course received their certificates in Bangkok at a memorable ceremony. The two-year FETPV programme, the result of a collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Thailand Department of Livestock Development (DLD), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union (EU), has evolved to become FAO's flagship programme as it grows in influence and acceptance over the Asia-Pacific region.

The FETPV class of 2009 included, among others, Dr. Htun Min (*right, top*), Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Myanmar; Dr. Gunawan Setiaji (*right, middle*), Denpasar Disease Investigation Center, Directorate General of Livestock Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia; Dr. Wang Youming (*right, bottom*), China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center, Veterinary Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, PR China; and Dr. Wilaiporn Vongprueksasong, Bureau of Disease Control and Veterinary Services, Department of Livestock Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand.

The certificates were jointly presented to them by Deputy Director-General of the DLD, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the Director-General of the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. Also in attendance were senior officials from the FAO, World Health Organization, the Centre for Disease Control, DLD, and DDC.

The goal of FETPV is to provide "training through service" and is based upon

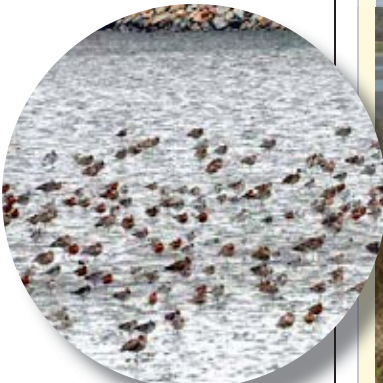
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One for the birds



To mark World Migratory Bird Day, the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership invited some 80 city officials of Incheon, South Korea, with their children, to a waterbird watching and education program on 5 May 2011. The half day program was designed to promote awareness of tidal flats in the region as an important habitat for migratory waterbirds and to stimulate public efforts to conserve them. Participants visited Namdong Reservoir to observe nesting Black-faced Spoonbills, and Yeongjong Island to observe migratory shorebirds roosting.



the well-established medical training model called the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP). The capacity of the individual and the institution is built up together and requires both training and mentoring. FETPV also promotes the establishment of formal and informal networks of veterinarians who apply their skills in field epidemiology. This training model requires strong institutional support and thoughtful development of human resources.

Drumming up support

To advocate for support for FETPV across the region, FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases Regional office for Asia and the Pacific (ECTAD-RAP) organized a three-day meeting in Phuket, Thailand in August 2010. Participants included Chief Veterinary Officers and technical experts from countries from south and Southeast Asia and also Dr Juan Lubroth, FAO's Chief Veterinary Officer. The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the benefits of veterinary epidemiology capacity building, gain a better understanding of the needs, gaps and required investments, share experiences and lessons learned for strengthening veterinary epidemiology in national veterinary services and to develop strategies and collaborative mechanisms to sustain epidemiology capacity building in the Region of Asia and the Pacific.

The meeting ended with agreement to start a strategic planning process for countries in the region and to utilize epidemiology to support a multidisciplinary, multisectoral and multihazard approach to emergency management. FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) agreed to support member countries in

developing national and regional strategies for developing capacity in veterinary epidemiology, particularly human resources, through systematic training according to identified national needs.

Since then, FETPV has made steady inroads across the region. China FETPV was officially launched in 2010 and includes 15 Chinese veterinarians from national and provincial levels of government. Regional FETPV and FAO staff has provided training related to surveillance field studies and biostatistics in collaboration with the Royal Veterinary College and CIRAD. FAO ECTAD-RAP continues to provide ongoing support and advice to China FETPV, which continues its close collaboration with China's FETP and Ministry of Health.

Early assessments

Based on feasibility studies done in India in late 2010 and early 2011, a short course is being developed in close cooperation with the National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai, which provides a highly regarded FETP. An implementation plan has been developed for initiating FETPV in India and to provide advocacy for the program.

Interest and demand for FETPV in Southeast, East and South Asia continue to grow. More staff and resources are needed to address the burgeoning demand.

FETPV 2011 Milestones

Third Annual FETPV pre-requisite course Veterinary Field Epidemiology in Action, Thailand, Jan 17–Feb 11 2011. Included nine international trainees from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam, and nine from Thailand.

Geographic Information Training Workshop, Feb 2011: Included three international and two Thai FETPV trainees.

Two-week international fellowship, Apr 2011: Hosted by Colorado State University and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Included two international and one Thai FETPV trainee.

Graduation ceremony, Jun 2011: The first cohort of two international trainees from Indonesia and Myanmar and two Thai trainees graduated at a ceremony held in June 2011.

New training course begins, Jun 2011: The third cohort of five trainees from Myanmar, Indonesia and Viet Nam, and two Thai trainees began a nine-week joint training with medical doctors in FETP.

Third short training course, Khon Kaen University, Thailand, Jun 2011. Included 10 para-veterinarians from Lao PDR, and trainers, university faculty and staff from Regional FETPV and FAO ECTAD-RAP.

Scientific writing training, Aug 2011: Second year FETPV trainees participated in a scientific writing training module and submitted an abstract to an international conference to be held in December 2011 in the USA.



The first batch of graduates (right) of the Field Epidemiology Training Programme for Veterinarians received their certificates on June 6 at a ceremony in Bangkok.

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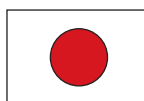
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REGIONAL UPDATE

Epi lessons from the field

FAO India organizes a trip for Indian government policy makers to study best practices in Thailand and Viet Nam

Indian study tour to Thailand and Viet Nam

May 2011 • Viet Nam and Thailand

The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DAHDF), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India is implementing the project *Immediate Technical Assistance to Strengthen Emergency Preparedness for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)* in collaboration with FAO.

Improved understanding of the epidemiology of HPAI in India for rational and targeted control of the disease is one of the outputs of the project. Towards achieving this, FAO organized country visits for Indian government policy makers to study the best practices for surveillance and epidemiology in Thailand (for X-ray surveillance) and Viet Nam (for grass-roots level surveillance and HPAI vaccination).

The DAHDF nominated Mr R S Rana, Joint Secretary, and Dr P K Shukla, Joint Commissioner (Poultry), who were accompanied by Dr Leo Loth of FAO, India.

Among the recommendations for improving HPAI control in India that emerged from these visits were to review the size of the stamping out area (culling zone) around HPAI farms or villages (currently 3 kms); and to study the potential for



enhancing the current surveillance system with the Thai Volunteers Village (X-ray) Surveillance as a guideline and example.

One Health Event: UN China promotes a multidisciplinary approach to fight against Emerging Infectious Diseases

29-30 June • Beijing, China

Convened by the UN Theme Group on Health's sub-working group on diseases at the human-animal interface, and coordinated by ECTAD China, a One Health event took place in the UN Compound on 29-30 June in Beijing, China. The multisectoral event was attended by participants from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the State Forestry Administration, the World Health Organization (WHO), an

EU delegation and USAID.

Also attending were FAO ECTAD, FAO RAP, FAO HQ, FAO ECTAD China, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the China Animal Disease Control Centre, among many others.

Presentations and discussions focused on three themes: Lessons learned from HPAI H5N1 and H1N1 pandemic influenza; an integrated approach to agricultural health through linking natural resource management, wildlife, livestock production and food security; and disease emergence at the wildlife-livestock interface.

To New Zealand, to study

The EpiCentre epidemiology unit, a Centre of Excellence at the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Science, Massey University, New Zealand, has created a study to address the needs of India's Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DAHDF). The study, developed at FAO India's request and in close consultation with Dr Leo Loth, Chief Technical Advisor of FAO India, is a part of the USAID-funded project *Immediate Technical Assistance to Strengthen Emergency Preparedness for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) to India*. One of the project activities is providing overseas training in advanced epidemiology and surveillance to the technical staff of the Ministry of Agriculture. Dr. Sanjeev Kumar, Karnataka, and Dr. Amitav Chakravarty, Assam, are now in a three months training course in advanced epidemiology and statistics.



Left to right: Participating in the study tour, whose goal was an improved understanding of the epidemiology of HPAI, were Dr P K Shukla, Joint Commissioner (Poultry), DAHDF; Dr Santanu Bandyopadhyay, FAO Viet Nam; Mr R S Rana, Joint Secretary, DAHDF; Dr Dam Xuan Thanh, Deputy Director, Department of Animal Health; and Dr Leo Loth, FAO India



World Bank



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What Pont Pont and Htun Htun did last summer

Two bright sparks from Myanmar win a FAO-World Bank scholarship and show the benefits of south-south cooperation

Photos: C Y Gopinath



Back in Myanmar where they come from, Dr Pont Pont and Dr Htun Htun had a way of working together. Not only were they both graduates of Myanmar's University of Veterinary Science at Yezin, but their work has always been complementary and inter-related. As an epidemiologist, Dr Htun Htun Win worked in the field, gathering samples of H5N1 HPAI from farms that had had outbreaks. Waiting for those samples as a part of the team in the Virology Laboratory of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) would be Dr Pont Pont Mon, to conduct the diagnostic tests.

This pattern — he in the field, she in the lab — also characterizes the two years they have spent at the Chulalongkorn University's Veterinary Public Health programme, where they studied under a FAO fellowship under the project OSRO/MYA/801 WBK, which is funded by the Avian and Human Influenza Facility administered by the World Bank. The university bore the cost of reagents.

The scholarship is given to a pair of students, one each from virology and epidemiology. "Knowledge of English is the clincher," says Dr Htun Htun.

Shining example

Their two-year experience stands out as a shining example of south-south cooperation in education and capacity building. With the skills they have acquired at Chulalongkorn University, both Dr Pont Pont and Dr Htun Htun are set to make valuable contributions to their own country when they return.

Dr Alongkorn Amonsin, Associate Professor and Head of Chulalongkorn's

Department of Veterinary Public Health, who has mentored them through this period, says, "The good thing about this course is that international students trained in research go back and contribute to their home countries."

Main challenge

"The main challenge for us is to try and build them to be more confident and more comfortable with themselves and their newly acquired scientific techniques," said Dr Alongkorn.

Dr Pont Pont got to observe sequencing and tissue culture at the National Institute of Animal Health, where she worked for a month during the course.

Dr Htun Htun got the rich experience of field work in northern parts of Thailand. "Our advisor had many projects there," he

Dr Pont Pont Mon (above left) and Dr Htun Htun Win (above), studied under a FAO fellowship to attend the Chulalongkorn University's two-year Degree of Master of Science Program in Veterinary Public Health in Thailand

said, "so it was a great place for us to work."

The scholarship was significant for both. During their summer field work back in their home country of Myanmar, while Dr Htun Htun was conducting interviews and assessments in the field, Dr Pont Pont, working at the Yangon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). Here, she was able to study and understand proper sequencing technique in depth. This puts her now in a wonderful position to study and share better the characteristics of some of the viruses that are currently in circulation within the country of Myanmar.

Birds in the hand, birds in the bush

Many farmers in southern Viet Nam have begun to implement better biosecurity and following good practices such as fencing and separating their birds, with knowledge they have acquired through Farmers' Clubs, a USAID-funded project implemented by the Academy for Educational Development with technical support from FAO in 2008. When the project ended, farmers decided to keep the club going.



Photo: C Y Gopinath