Third Veterinary Epidemiology for the Executives (FETPV-E) workshop successfully held in Qingdao

Following the success of two previous Veterinary Epidemiology for Executives (FETPV-E) workshops, the third FETPV-E workshop was held in Qingdao from 6-7 July 2015. 45 senior officials from national, provincial, municipal animal health agencies in China attended the two-day workshop. The FETPV-E is a joint initiative by the Veterinary Bureau (VB) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center (CAHEC), EU-China Trade Project (Phase II) and FAO, which aims to enhance senior government officials' understanding of the basics of veterinary epidemiology and its role in disease control and thus strengthen their ability to develop effective animal and public health programs.

The third workshop mainly focused on application of veterinary epidemiology in surveillance and risk-based approaches with practical examples, consistency with "National Medium and Long-term Plan for Animal Epidemic Prevention and Control (2012-2020)" and developing a veterinary epidemiology team for China. It was combined several short but sharp talks and participatory sessions in aim to provide the participants experiences with informal and participative training approaches (similar to the FETPV training). The post-survey showed that 97% participants had better understanding of veterinary epidemiology and 89% had better understanding of risk-based approaches by participating in the training. 46% participants think more practical application is the highest priority for strengthening application of epidemiology in animal health policy development in China, and 24% voted for training more epidemiologists.

Dr Wang Gongmin, Deputy Director-General of the VB of the MoA; Dr Ma Hongchao, Director-General of the CAHEC; Prof John Edwards, Senior Technical Coordinator of FAO China ECTAD office; and Dr Javier Burchard, Key Agriculture Expert, EUCTP (II) attended the opening session and delivered opening remarks. The training was delivered by lead trainers Prof John Edwards (FAO) and Prof Dirk Pfeiffer (Royal Veterinary College). Experts from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC); CAHEC; Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI), Germany and Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR), Germany were also invited to give talks as co-trainers. The FETPV Chinese trainer team played a role of co-facilitators during the participatory sessions.

During the workshop, the Veterinary Bureau also announced the appointment of ten Chinese trainers for the China FETPV, most of them are graduates from regional and China FETPV. It is a significant step for shaping FETPV network and improving program sustainability.

China FETPV second workshop for Training of Chinese trainers (ToT) in Qingdao

China FETPV second workshop for Training of Chinese trainers was held in Qingdao from 8-10 July 2015. The workshop helped the Chinese trainers to have an insight into the best practice teaching methods and the theory underpinning these. Meanwhile, the participants also worked on developing the basic epidemiology training curriculum and materials in Chinese while ensuring the relevance to the Chinese context. Prof Dirk Pfeiffer and Dr Julian Drew from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) led the three-day workshop, and Dr Guo Fusheng and Mr Tang Hao from FAO China ECTAD provided facilitation. Experts from French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), FLI and BfR also participated into the workshop and had two scientific workshop sessions to exchange their studies with the participants.

This workshop was aligned with the Linking Epidemiology and Laboratory Research on Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses in China and EU (LinkTADs) WP3 workshop on field Epidemiology training. ToT is the new and prioritized initiative of FETPV, which aims to develop Chinese trainers’ capacity in teaching epidemiology. It is also an important step towards achieving sustainability of veterinary epidemiology capacity development for China.
FAO attendance at the LinkTADs WP3 workshop on design and evaluation of surveillance systems of important animal diseases in Qingdao

The LinkTADs WP3 workshop on design and evaluation of surveillance systems of important animal diseases was held in Qingdao from 13-14 July 2015. The workshop was jointly held by CAHEC, RVC and CIRAD. FAO China ECTAD office participated in and assisted with the organization of the workshop, while Prof John Edwards delivered a presentation entitled "The context, challenges, and opportunities for disease surveillance in China".

This workshop provided a platform for national and international epidemiologists to share experience in animal health surveillance from an epidemiology and a laboratory prospective and to discuss on improving the designing and evaluating of the surveillance systems for the priority diseases identified by the LinkTADs project, such as African Swine Fever (ASF) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

FAO attendance at the LinkTADs WP4 workshop on Novel Vaccines against Priority Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) in Harbin

The LinkTADs WP4 workshop on Novel Vaccines against Priority Transboundary Animal Diseases in EU and China was held in Harbin from 16-17 July 2015. The workshop was hosted by Harbin Veterinary Research Institute (HVRI). The major objective of the workshop was to strengthen the existing collaborations among the LinkTADs partners on laboratory research, with a special focus on vaccine development against priority transboundary animal diseases. Over 40 experts from 11 research institutes from the EU and China participated in the meeting.

Prof John Edwards, Dr Guo Fusheng and Dr Li Shuo from FAO China ECTAD office attended and facilitated the workshop. Prof Edwards presented the progress made by FAO China ECTAD on controlling avian influenza in China. During the workshop, Prof Edwards, Dr Guo Fusheng and Dr Li Shuo participated in the discussion on the research and development of new laboratory technologies and future collaborations between EU and China. During the discussion, it was again emphasized and recognized by all attendees that linking epidemiological knowledge with laboratory research is crucial for achieving successful prevention and control of priority animal diseases.

Prof John Edwards providing an veterinary epidemiology training in DPR Korea

Prof John Edwards paid a visit to DPR Korea from 30 June-2 July 2015 and conducted a three-day veterinary epidemiology training. This training was part of the FAO/DPR Korea Emergency Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and HPAI. Around 40 participants from central and provincial veterinary agencies attended the training. Major topics of the training included epidemiology, surveillance, sampling, interpretation of diagnostic tests, risk assessment and value chains.

During the training, a series of recommendations were made by the trainees and senior staff, which included: epidemiological and risk based approaches to surveillance for FMD and avian influenza should be applied at all levels; there should be more training in veterinary epidemiology; strengthen communication with neighboring countries; and focus on speed and capacity for diagnosis for high priority diseases. The training was highly valued by the participants, and they expressed that many aspects of the training would be beneficial to their work.

Upcoming activities

1. The Emerging Pandemic Threats Plus (EPT+) project activities will be implemented in Guangdong and Hunan Provinces in August 2015.
2. The Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop on Good Emergency Management Practice (GEMP) will be held in Beijing from 19-21 August 2015.