



◆ The first Chinese trainer workshop in 2017 - brainstorming on improving CFETPV quality



The first Chinese trainer workshop in Qingdao © FAO

The China Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (CFETPV) launched the 4th cohort by conducting an introductory course in October 2016. To enhance the sustainability of the program, the Veterinary Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), China recruited five new Chinese trainers from distinguished graduates of previous cohorts this year. The Chinese trainer team has expanded to 15 members, and they will not only engage into training activities such as teaching and mentoring, but also epidemiology applications.

The first Chinese trainer workshop in 2017 was held in Qingdao from 25 to 26 February, aiming to brainstorm on improving CFETPV quality and enhancing epidemiology applications. Dr Guo

Fusheng, Team Leader of FAO China ECTAD, opened the workshop and encouraged the Chinese trainers to best use of the CFETPV platform to facilitate epidemiology applications in disease control and other animal health issues.

After a two-day productive discussion, the following outcomes were reached:

- Curricula of training modules were reviewed to better tailor the needs of the 4th cohort, and the workplan of teaching was drafted. Every Chinese trainer will engage in the teaching;
- Requirements of trainees' field practice assignments as well as the mentoring mechanism were finalized. All Chinese trainers agreed that the quality of trainees' field practices needs to be improved, which is strongly related to the quality of mentoring;
- To improve trainees' practical skills, they will take intensive exercises and paper critique tasks in the interim of training modules. Chinese trainers will be in charge of the design of exercises and tasks;
- As one of the priorities identified by the Steering Committee, the Chinese trainer team will work together to finalize the 'instructor manual of basic veterinary epidemiology' and publish it this year. Workplan of the manual development was agreed by all Chinese trainers; and
- Every Chinese trainer will design at least one case study this year to contribute to the CFETPV case bank. The development of an open-source case bank will benefit for veterinary epidemiology trainings at all levels in China.

The participants also exchanged ideas about trainers' capacity building and other key activities in 2017, and also discussed emerging issues, such as H7N9 and brucellosis control.

◆ Value chain studies annual planning workshop in Qingdao

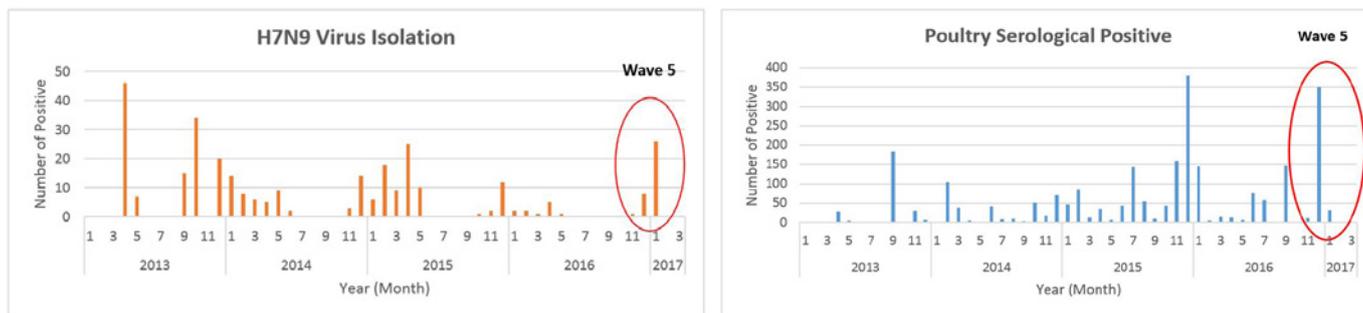
Since 2014, FAO China ECTAD Office in partnership with the Veterinary Bureau (VB), MoA and local authorities have been conducting pilot value chain studies in Guangxi, Yunnan and Hunan Provinces, aiming to better understand the poultry trading network and provide sound evidence for risk management. The annual planning workshop was held in Qingdao on 27 February 2017. The workshop was attended by the national coordinator (Dr Shen Chaojian), provincial coordinators (Drs Zou Lianbin, Huang Jianlong and Zhao Huanyun) and some CFETPV 4th cohort trainees, and facilitated by Dr Yu Qi from FAO China ECTAD Office.

The participants reviewed the progress and findings from the value chain studies in the past year. Based on the current finding, they had a heated discussion to identify future priorities and formulated the workplan in 2017. The value chain studies in Guangxi and Yunnan will focus on the risk of transboundary animal diseases spread among the border areas. While in Hunan Province, it will focus on the better understanding of poultry trade patterns and its possible roles in human infections. Besides, the detailed timeline for each study was defined and agreed by the participants. During the workshop, the role of value chain study in animal disease prevention and control was highlighted, and it needs to be combined with the epidemiological risk analysis to provide evidence for risk-based surveillance and interventions through the trade network.

◆ FAO is engaging in H7N9 response and control

Influenza A (H7N9) first emerged in China in March 2013, over 1200 human infections were reported since then. A steep increase in the number of humans, who were infected with H7N9 virus, was observed in December 2016. 106 cases of H7N9 human infection were reported in the country in that month, which had raised a great public concern. In January 2017, the number of human infections has continuously risen up to 192. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)'s surveillance results showed that the positive samples of H7N9 infected birds, which were found in poultry in December 2016 and January 2017, were increased compared with

the previous months (see the figures below). An increase in contamination was noticed in live bird markets (LBMs) from monitoring results conducted by provincial health authorities. In addition, there have also been new signs that H7N9 has shifted from low to high pathogenicity in poultry which requires further investigation and close monitoring to understand the evolution of this virus.



Source: MoA National H7N9 Surveillance results (Data available by January 2017)

To respond to the current H7N9 emergency, FAO China ECTAD Office worked with FAO HQs and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) to take the following actions:

- Monitoring the situation closely through its network of decentralized offices and Reference Centres for Influenza. FAO liaised with its key partners, including World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and World Health Organization (WHO). FAO's disease situation updates on H7N9 and guidelines are available online at: <http://www.fao.org/h7n9>;
- Coordinating several online calls with the WHO and OIE to update the disease situation and providing possible recommendations for tackling H7N9 crisis;
- Meeting with WHO China and U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (USCDC) China on 14th February 2017 to share information and to discuss how to safely control LBMs. Recommendations on feasible measures can be provided to the government, as well as some possible projects can be jointly conducted in the future; and
- Setting up an expert panel. Surveillance and control measures to animal health sector will be discussed for prevention of H7N9 virus spreading.



Source: http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/H7N9/Situation_update.html

In order to better understand the current status of H7N9 virus infection and to study the virus mutation and epidemic situation, the MoA of China strengthened surveillance by conducting an emergency surveillance program from 25 January to 28 February 2017. It covered the key provinces which had human infections or poultry detected as H7N9 pathogenic positive since December 2016, and also included some provinces with large population of poultry. It also addressed that poultry clinics, yellow feather broilers farms, large-scale layer farms, breeding poultry farms, LBMs (wholesale and retail) and poultry slaughterhouses to be the major sampling places.

Epidemiological investigations showed most H7N9 human cases had a LBM exposure history. Some local authorities already launched permanent or seasonal markets closure policies. For example, Shanghai closed all the LBMs from January to April 2017. However, it is still quite difficult to change live poultry consumption behavior within a short period, especially in south China. In the aim of improving biosecurity of LBMs and mitigating the risk of human infections, a '1110' approach (cleaning once a day, disinfection once a week, market closure once a month and no poultry is allowed to stay overnight) was recommended by the MoA. Studies to measure the effectiveness of these interventions need to be considered, thus providing evidence for future H7N9 control. Moreover, value chain studies to understand poultry trade routes will also contribute to the management of the risk of possible virus spread through poultry trading.

! Upcoming activity

1. The United Nations Theme Group on Agriculture (UNTG-Ag) Sub-Working Group on Disease at the Human-Animal Interface meeting focusing on Influenza A (H7N9) will be held in Beijing on 3 March 2017.
2. Dr Han Zifeng, Assistant National Technical Advisor of FAO China ECTAD Office will attend the Meeting on global coordination for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) from 22 to 24 March 2017 in Rome, Italy.



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