

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

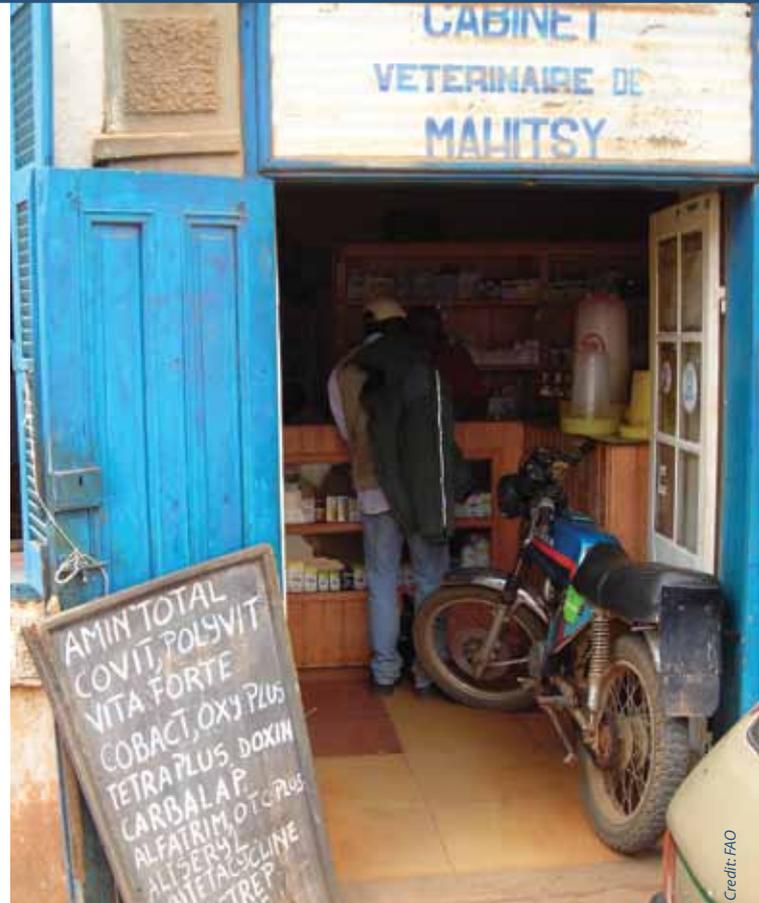
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THE ISSUE

The effective implementation of technical solutions to agricultural issues is often constrained by the limited collaboration between the public and private sectors. This is largely due to the absence of adequate platforms for engagement in dialogue, exchange of information and development of trust-building processes between stakeholders within these sectors.

Moreover, the recent H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) crisis has highlighted that delivery of public animal health services in countries most affected by the disease is often inadequate. Factors include: the major changes occurring in livestock sectors, in particular the dynamic and rapidly changing poultry sub-sector; the limited financial and human resources of national veterinary services; and the lack of appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Closer collaboration between the public and private sectors (including poultry chain actors and private veterinarians) is required to facilitate the development of enhanced prevention measures and responses to crises and to mitigate market shocks.



Veterinary clinic in Madagascar, providing local services as well as selling veterinary drugs

THE FACTS

Within the livestock sector, the poultry industry is one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing. However, weak relationships and poor collaboration between public veterinary services and the private poultry sector, result in ineffective disease control, which affects productivity and profitability. Despite its rapid growth, importance and contribution to national economies and food security, the commercial poultry sector faces major challenges that require innovative thinking among and engagement between, all stakeholders within countries.

Examples illustrating the value of closer dialogue and collaboration between the public and private sectors, include:

- ▶ *Thailand:* the commercial poultry sector, which had experienced major losses due to export bans, proactively engaged with the government to address H5N1 HPAI.
- ▶ *Turkey:* the private poultry sector is a key member of the national communication task force and contributed significantly to rebuilding consumer confidence in poultry products through substantial investment and innovative campaigns.
- ▶ *Egypt and Indonesia:* Participatory Disease Surveillance initiatives, based upon close cooperation between veterinary authorities, farmers, consumers and private veterinarians, proved to be successful.

Conversely, a lack of dialogue and engagement between the public and private sector can have negative consequences for a country's disease control programme: ranging from inequitable compensation schemes, clandestine importation and unauthorized use of vaccines, to antagonism and a culture of blame between large, profit-oriented commercial producers and small-scale backyard farmers. Inadequate epidemiological and disease data from the private sector, poor biosecurity among smaller commercial enterprises and a lack of coherence in disease control strategies, is common in many countries.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

The institutional arrangements for animal disease prevention and control need to take into account and be sensitive to, the objectives of the public and private sectors, within the different components of poultry production systems. Moreover, the establishment of appropriate open platforms to facilitate the development of constructive collaboration between public and private actors in the poultry sector is crucial.

The strengthening of public-private partnerships requires that the following questions are addressed:

- ▶ Can the differing and sometimes contradictory agendas of the public and private sectors be harmonized and leveraged as a public good?
- ▶ Will public-private partnerships encourage improved disease prevention, earlier reporting and detection and more effective control in endemic-disease settings?
- ▶ What key legislation and regulations need to be re-examined or adapted to facilitate effective participation of the private sector in national animal health system policy dialogue?
- ▶ Could increased collaboration between the sectors result in inequitable outcomes, when governments implement disease mitigation measures in response to disease outbreaks?

FAO'S POSITION

Public-private partnerships are based on shared interests and mutual benefits, and thus contribute to enhancing the sustainability of systems/activities put in place. For animal health, such partnerships are instrumental in the development of new modes of sharing responsibilities and rationalising national veterinary activities, resulting in enhanced crisis prevention.

The strengthening of the relationship between public and private institutions involved in the poultry sector requires that roles and responsibilities within the animal health system are clearly defined, respecting the mandates of each party and recognizing that animal health measures relate to both public and private goods.



Leadership of national animal health systems should remain with the official veterinary services, particularly for animal diseases with a potentially high economic impact or public health dimension, and prevention and control of which is a public good. This requires well-equipped, well-staffed and financially sustainable veterinary services at the central and decentralized levels, with an appropriate chain of command. Delegation of public health functions to the private sector often requires that an accreditation process is in place. Functional collaboration with the private sector is a key principle of the World Organisation for Animal Health standards on good veterinary governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The capacity of the public sector to lead in decision-making processes should be strengthened through technical and leadership training.
- ▶ The capacity of the public sector to integrate private sector ideas and suggestions in decision-making processes should be strengthened through collaborative interventions, interactive workshops and on-the-job training.
- ▶ The public and private sectors should jointly develop and implement aspects of contingency and emergency plans, biosecurity strategies, guidelines and measures; and where possible, harmonize their respective biosecurity training materials and participate in response simulation exercises.
- ▶ Compensation mechanisms should be collaboratively developed, to ensure fair and equitable compensation to all stakeholders.
- ▶ Where regulations are weak, promote the restructuring of live markets and commodities.
- ▶ Identify policy champions to encourage the development of mutual trust and confidence between all actors.

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