

'Learning By Doing' is Key to Disease Control in Poultry

25 September 2006, Jakarta – 'Learning by doing' is the best way to get people involved in action to control avian flu in poultry, according to the official in charge of the coordinated U.N. system to fight the disease.

Speaking in Bangkok, Dr David Nabarro, U.N. System Influenza Coordinator (UNSIC), added that increased commitment by all concerned to continue the fight against the disease at source in animals is the key to preventing an influenza pandemic.

He was commenting on the approach FAO is taking with national and local government health services in Indonesia to implement a community-based approach to disease surveillance and control, which has provided better understanding of the endemic nature of the disease and of the concerns of household poultry raisers about the costs and dangers involved.

FAO is coordinating capacity development in key aspects of animal disease control in the country with financial assistance from the governments of United States (USAID), Australia (AUSAID) and Japan. "It is recognized that a lot of human and financial resources are needed to expand the capacity to effectively control HPAI," said Mr Man Ho So, FAO Representative in Indonesia.

"It's a major challenge. With the geographic range of the country, the large informal poultry production sector, the diversity of poultry species and the decentralized administrative structure, it is going to take time to turn the tide," noted Dr Laurence Gleeson, FAO Asian Regional Coordinator for HPAI.

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District veterinarians trained under FAO's participatory disease surveillance and response programme vaccinating ducks in Depok, south of Jakarta, on the island of Java (Photo: Aphaluck Bhatiasevi)