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The establishment of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific within the framework of the FAO was initiated by Asian nations at the 5th FAO Regional Conference on Animal Production in 1974. The Commission became operational in December 1975 and today has 18 member countries. It supports sustainable improvement in rural livestock agriculture and resource use through information sharing, disease control, enhanced organizational efficiency, the diversification of farm production, value-chain development and other initiatives. APHCA works on the principle of collective self-reliance and mutual assistance among developing countries.

APHCA Mission Statement

APHCA's mission is to enhance the level of nutrition and standard of living of livestock keepers, especially smallholders, people working in livestock value-chains, and communities at large through equitable, sustainable and safe livestock sector development. This will be achieved by promoting information generation and exchange, providing normative guidance and coordinating joint action among member countries and other stakeholders.

The state of animal production and health in Asia and the Pacific: challenges and opportunities

Increases in population and disposable income in Asian countries are driving an unprecedented

rise in demand for meat and dairy products. This growing demand is severely stretching the capacity of existing food production systems. Feed prices have been increasingly volatile because of the impact from climate change and natural disasters, as well as from increasing demand for grains to produce biofuels. Ensuring access to quality feed in sufficient quantity is one of the key strategic priorities for livestock sector development. Thirteen APHCA countries have conducted national feed assessments and balances as a first step towards more rational management of national feed resources.

The vast majority of livestock keepers in the Asia-Pacific region are small-scale household producers. Some 800 million live on less than \$2 a day. Growing demand for animal products could drive poverty alleviation and rural development. But, so far, governments have not grasped this opportunity and growth in a poorly regulated livestock sector comes with major animal and human health risks as well as with negative environmental and social impacts.

What APHCA does in the region

Against this background, the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with other units in FAO and international partners like the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO), continue to carry out a number of initiatives in the region.

Capacity building and training in technical measures and controls

Brucellosis is one of the main endemic zoonoses affecting livestock and people in the Asia-Pacific region. It causes both losses in animal production as well as human suffering. Together with OIE's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, APHCA is building capacity in brucellosis diagnosis and control by testing the proficiency of 16 laboratories under the Joint FAO-APHCA/OIE Brucellosis Diagnosis and Control Programme in the region.

APHCA has also been instrumental in mobilizing technical and financial support to establish a Regional Dairy Training Centre in Chiang Mai in association with the Royal Thai Government and other partners. APHCA is exploring ways and means to sustain and expand the centre's activities to meet the growing needs for technical training in milk processing and quality management.

Assessments and planning

Delegates from 15 APHCA countries in the Asia-Pacific region recently presented and reviewed the extent of antimicrobial use (AMU) in livestock production and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in microorganisms isolated from livestock and livestock products. Although only limited data are available on the use of antimicrobials in farm animals in the region, the high prevalence of AMR to selected compounds found in enteric microorganisms isolated from food-producing animals and retail meat across Asian countries provides indirect evidence of widespread misuse of antimicrobials in livestock production. To improve the general knowledge about the extent of AMR in livestock-associated pathogens to which humans are exposed, APHCA has commissioned a systematic review of the literature on the subject.

Regional information exchange

To support continuous updating and improvement of national feed assessments and balances, FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and APHCA are setting up the Asia-Pacific Animal Feed (APAF) Network to produce regularly updated feed resource inventories, characterize and map feeding systems, assess and forecast feed demand and supply, monitor prices and trade in feed and feed ingredients, and develop guidelines on feed resource management.

An Asia Smallholder Dairy Development Network was recently launched under the auspices of the Asia Australasia Association of Animal Production Societies and a website, www.dairyasia.org, has also been set up. Through these platforms, members receive regular updates on dairy-related developments in the region.

APHCA further contributes to regional information exchange on animal diseases through participation in the regional meetings of the Global Framework for Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) while information on AMR is shared with respective working groups of OIE and WHO.

Finally, APHCA maintains a website which serves as a regional point of reference for animal health and production-related news and information.

CONTACT

Joachim Otte

Secretary
Animal Production and Health
Commission for Asia and the
Pacific (APHCA)
FAO Regional Office for Asia and
the Pacific

Address: 39 Phra Atit Rd
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand

Tel: (+66 2) 697 4326

Publications: Asian Livestock Challenges, Opportunities and the Response (2013)

http://www.aphca.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=217&Itemid=120

Health and Animal Agriculture in Developing Countries (2012)

http://www.aphca.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=227&Itemid=120

LINKS

Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific

<http://www.aphca.org/>

World Organization for Animal Health (Asia and the Pacific office)

<http://www.rr-asia.oie.int/>

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Maliwan Mansion, 39 Phra Atit Road
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Tel: (+66 2) 697 4000
Fax: (+66 2) 697 4445
Email: FAO-RAP@fao.org
www.fao.org
www.fao.org/world/regional/rap