

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION FOR THE PREVENTION, DETECTION AND CONTROL OF TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES

ECTAD
Emergency Centre
for Transboundary Animal Diseases



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THE ISSUE

Transboundary animal diseases (TADs) pose a serious threat to livestock, spreading across borders, regions and even continents to endanger the animals upon which 12 percent of the world's population depends for living. Many TADs also put public health at risk, with 70 percent of new diseases which affect humans, having animal origins.

The prevention and control of TADs cannot be adequately addressed by individual countries acting alone (Global Public Good dimension). In addition, it requires a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to address not only the diseases themselves but the global factors that trigger their emergence at the human-animal-ecosystem interface. Protecting livestock can only be accomplished through strong political commitment, a unified holistic approach and dedicated financial investment.

International coordination – to improve knowledge, advocacy, planning, monitoring and resource mobilization – can help to address TADs by ensuring that: (i) the livestock sector (and animal health) is high on the international development agenda; (ii) a common vision is shared between all involved stakeholders, through priority alignment; and (iii) resources are best utilized, with enhanced synergies, complementarities and resource pooling.



The annual, high-level, tripartite meeting between FAO, OIE and WHO is an excellent example of international coordination of actions on the animal and human health domains

THE FACTS

Since the late 1990s, there has been a recognized need to use public resources more efficiently, supported by stronger coordination (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness; One United Nations, with aid delivered as one; Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers, etc.).

Coordination among the various international organizations has significantly improved over recent years, prompted by the magnitude, frequency and seriousness – for public health and national and household economies – of recent epizootics in animals:

- ▶ Following the epizootics of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in South America and in Europe in 2000 and 2001, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) agreed upon a global coordination initiative – the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) – which combines the strengths of the two organizations to prevent, detect and control animal diseases, particularly at the global and regional levels. The World Health Organization (WHO) is also associated with this mechanism for zoonoses of a transboundary nature and for the FAO-OIE-WHO Global Early Warning and Response System for Major Animal Diseases (GLEWS). Coordination with key stakeholders at the global and regional level and their guidance to FAO and OIE is made possible through the GF-TADs advisory entities: the global and regional (Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Middle-East) Steering Committees, which act as dialogue and coordination platforms.
- ▶ The rapid spread of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Southeast Asia in 2004 and then to Europe and Africa in 2005 and 2006 prompted an unprecedented and exemplary global response under the United Nations System Influenza Coordination umbrella, and resulted in joint strategies, advocacy and programme implementation. FAO, together with OIE, WHO and other stakeholders, led the organization of international conferences and consultations in support of strategic areas of work (including surveillance, response, simulation exercises and evaluation of contingency plans, vaccination, communication, coordination between the public health and livestock/agriculture communities, biosecurity, wildlife, and building technical capacity in countries). Coordinated disease intelligence and communication on animal and human influenza (AHI), through GLEWS has been instrumental in ensuring the efficiency of the response.
- ▶ For H5N1HPAI, country case studies show that where collaboration has been most effective, there has been a clearly articulated strategy.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

While a high level of collaboration and synergy among key stakeholders characterises the response to H5N1 HPAI and pandemic influenza A(H1N1) 2009, it also needs to be demonstrated for other priority TADs and threats from emerging diseases, including outside of 'crisis periods'. This applies in particular to collaboration between the animal and human health sectors at all levels, which has led to improved early detection of disease in animals and streamlined responses during the H5N1 HPAI crisis. There is a need to ensure that information continues to be shared between the two sectors, for H5N1 HPAI – even when interest in the disease is waning – and for other priority TADs/zoonoses.

Dwindling international attention on the livestock sector in general over recent decades has led to a scarcity of resources for animal diseases with minor or non-pandemic risk. Moreover, donors are often ill-equipped to finance activities at the global and, to a lesser extent, regional levels, which is where international coordination usually initially operates.

The multi-agency One World One Health Strategic Framework (FAO-OIE-WHO-UNICEF, in collaboration with UNSIC and the World Bank) which will frame international effort over the next five years and beyond, addresses these challenges and aims to ensure that international coordination momentum from the H5N1 HPAI response is sustained.

FAO'S POSITION

FAO strongly supports international coordination and is already engaged in several coordination mechanisms (FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite meetings, GF-TADS, ALive), structures and tools (EU-FMD; OIE/FAO network of expertise on animal influenza [OFFLU], GLEWS, Crisis Management Centre – Animal Health [CMC-AH]; Regional Animal Health Centres; global and regional networks) and programmes (Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme; ALive/Integrated National Actions Plans; Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases regional coordination programme in Asia; and FMD in the Andean region and in Central Asia). In addition, global coordination is at the centre of the FAO normative programme for prevention and control of TADs and zoonoses.

FAO's leading role in international coordination needs to be further reinforced given its global mandate in development, food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable agriculture (including animal health), its recognized and trusted leadership by member countries in global livestock issues, and its well-established role as a neutral broker.

FAO believes that coordination of interventions must be sought whenever possible, with respect to the specific mandates and areas of expertise of all partners involved, and at all levels. Coordination means synergies and complementarities, rather than fusion/merging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Reinforce FAO's collaboration with strategic/technical and financial partners, with GF-TADs and ECTAD being in a pivotal role.
- ▶ Develop joint strategies and roadmaps with strategic partners for the prevention and control of TADs worldwide, within the agreed multi-agency OWOH strategic framework.
- ▶ Reinforce strategic alliances among international technical agencies to reposition animal health in the global development agenda and lead its development (global governance).

References and Resources:

- *Contributing to "One World, One Health":*
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/aj137e/aj137e00.pdf>
- *GF-TADs Agreement (2004):*
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/ak136e/ak136e00.pdf>

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