



A laboratory session at the Geelong workshop to harmonize epidemiology and laboratory protocols for surveillance of animal influenza in Asia.



Australia

Going regional at Geelong

Harmonizing epidemiology and laboratory protocols for surveillance of animal influenza in Asia

THE PORT OF GEELONG is the second largest city in the Australian state of Victoria, with an urban population of only 160,991. The climate is temperate, with four distinct seasons. The city is the home to car-maker Ford Australia and the Geelong Australian Rule Football Club.

In December last year, Geelong also became the hub of an activity crucial to the fight against highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Two events were organized by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaborating with the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) and Murdoch University in Geelong: a workshop on surveillance and laboratory diagnosis of animal influenza in Asia (Dec 9-11) and a regional training on surveillance, diagnosis

and molecular characterization of animal influenza (Dec 14-19).

The workshop aimed to harmonize epidemiology and laboratory protocols for surveillance of animal influenza in Asia. Participants included resource experts and country representatives from 11 countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Everyone agreed that the guiding principles document that emerged from the workshop on surveillance and diagnosis of animal influenza in Asia, focused on H1N1 in pigs and molecular surveillance of H5N1 in poultry, will be implemented.

In the training sessions, participants learned and practiced on

serology, molecular diagnosis, virus isolation and gene sequence analysis. They also learned about current molecular epidemiology of HPAI and the need for molecular information generated from coordinated surveillance. They supported the regional approach to molecular studies and agreed with the focus on Bangladesh and West Bengal in the Indo-Gangetic Plains, Viet Nam and Yunnan in the Greater Mekong Subregion, and Indonesia.

The meetings were supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, the government of Japan, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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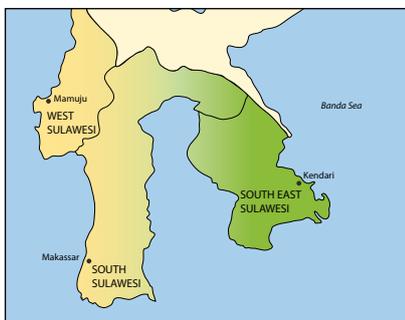
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People power in Sulawesi

Since May 2009, Indonesia's Village Biosecurity, Education and Communication programme has been demonstrating the power of engaging communities in surveillance and prevention activities



Most villagers in the Indonesian province of Sulawesi simply do not know about animal health services. When a chicken dies, they are quite likely to dispose of the carcass in a rice field or a river. In areas where the soil is hard or the

water table high, this can be the beginning of trouble.

This was only one of the findings that emerged from a recent qualitative and quantitative socio-cultural assessment of communities in six pilot villages in West and South Sulawesi provinces of Indonesia. The study was designed by medical social anthropologist Sani Silwana, on behalf of the Village Biosecurity, Education and Communication (VBEC) programme, started in May 2009, and conducted by Inninawa, a research foundation based in the University of Hasannudin, Makassar.

Since 2006, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been developing a system of surveillance, village-based prevention and control of avian influenza based on the Participatory Disease Surveillance and Response (PDSR) approach. PDSR is driven by the active involvement of community members. Building their capacity to par-

ticipate is a significant part of a PDSR officer's work.

In South and West Sulawesi, with support from AusAID, more than 230 trained district livestock services officers have been conducting regular village-based surveillance, as well as working with communities to control and prevent diseases.

Though South Sulawesi is a key area for commercial poultry production for eastern Indonesia, most egg layers and broilers here are produced in conditions of low biosecurity in a village environment that includes free-ranging village chickens, ducks and hobby birds. The VBEC program views an entire village as an epidemiological unit in which prevention or control measures will need to be effective.

The villages of Padangiring, Panreng, Lembang-Lembang, Pattalassang, and Parangbanoa, Jene'Taesa were selected after a painstaking process to ensure the representation the major language, cultural groups and poultry production systems in South and West Sulawesi. Also represented were provincial, local and village



The survey revealed that chicken owners are generally reluctant to permanently cage their birds

authorities, as well as key poultry producers and community leaders from targeted areas.

Several key insights emerged from the social cultural assessment, which aimed to describe social and cultural factors and community knowledge, attitudes and practice associated with poultry raising, risks of disease, actions when poultry are affected by disease and poultry movement.

Chicken owners are generally reluctant to permanently cage birds, citing the expense and work of providing food, and the better health and taste of free ranging birds. However, many will separate sick from healthy poultry or separate poultry newly introduced to the village.

By and large, backyard chickens



South Sulawesi villages are characterized by the presence of free ranging village chicken, ducks and hobby birds, and conditions of low biosecurity

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The most suitable media for reaching household members are short films and speeches or discussions through community and religious forums

are bred within the village, although some may enter the village as gifts for special ceremonies or holidays.

Relatively high numbers of people are not aware of the animal health services and are unlikely to report sick or dying chickens to authorities.

Dead chickens are frequently disposed of in rice fields or rivers, which can be a significant public health challenge in areas with high water tables and hard soil. Burning requires input of expensive firewood or kerosene.

The most suitable media for reaching household members are short films and speeches or discussions through community and religious forums. However, commercial and hobby producers in particular are most likely to listen to the advice of a known successful breeder or producer.

The results will be used to roll out the program in the pilot villages, including appropriate communication messages and materials. In addition, the VBEC program is supporting a process through a local NGO consortium (Konsorsium LSM Lokal Sulawesi KL2SS) who are helping communities better understand how diseases move so that they may develop realistic local actions for improving biosecurity in each pilot village.

Other activities in selected villages include supporting a pilot compost heap to look at alternative methods of chicken carcass disposal, and building demonstration housing for village chickens.

National Workshop on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds Something for the birds



November 25, 2009, Bangkok: A national one-day workshop on *Avian Influenza and Wild Birds: From surveillance to Data sharing and publication* was held in Novotel Hotel, jointly organized by FAO-USDA-Zoological Park Organization, Thailand. The workshop brought together experts, scientists, researchers and wildlife enthusiasts involved in avian Influenza research during the past four years in Thailand and provided researchers with a platform for information sharing and to facilitate publication for a wider audience. Robert Tanaka, Attache, United States Department of Agriculture, delivered the opening remarks, and Subhash Morzaria, Regional Manager, ECTAD-RAP, followed with his keynote address on One World One Health. Among the ideas emerging from this meeting was a compilation of the work done on avian influenza.



Another survey finding was that relatively high numbers of people are unaware of animal health services and are unlikely to report sick or dying chickens to authorities



World Bank



Netherlands



China



Norway



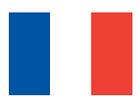
European Union



New Zealand



Ireland



France

AVET comes to Viet Nam

Veterinarians in Vietnam get their first ever intensive applied veterinary epidemiology training in preventing HPAI



Eleven veterinarians were selected for Vietnam's first AVET course which included three one-week modules of class room exercises in Hanoi and six weeks for field project implementation

Dec 14, 2009 Hanoi, Vietnam The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the first course of the Applied Veterinary Epidemiology Training (AVET) program was launched on 14 December last year at the AVET Training Center (equipped with additional funding support from the UNJ project), based in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The opening ceremony was chaired by Dr Hoang Van Nam, Vice Director of the Department of Animal Health (DAH) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). On this occasion, Dr Tran Duc Vien, Director of the Hanoi University of Agriculture (HUA) and Dr Santanu Bandyopadhyay, Team Leader of FAO's Vietnam Avian Influenza Programme were also present.

The AVET course has been developed in partnership between HUA, DAH and FAO's Avian Influenza programme.

Eleven veterinarians have been selected for this first training programme, coming from the Regional Animal Health Offices (RAHO), the Department of Microbiology & Infectious Diseases of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of HUA, the National Centre for Veterinary Diagnostic (NCVD), the Epidemiology Unit of DAH and the Nong Lam University of Ho Chi Minh City.

The training schedule includes three one-week modules of class room exercises in Hanoi, and six weeks for field project

implementation. Each trainee will be requested to run their field project in their own place of work on a subject to be decided on the basis of the disease situation there. They will also be mentored through the implementation of the project and for a final written and oral presentation of their work at the end of the training.

GF-TADS subregional meeting for ASEAN

Dec 6, 2009 Jakarta, Indonesia The GF-TADS sub-regional meeting for ASEAN, originally scheduled for June 2009, was finally held from December 6 to 9 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Except for Singapore and Brunei, all the other eight countries, including Japan, were represented as members of the ASEAN+3 grouping. FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) together with the ASEAN Secretariat opened the meeting. Subhash Morzaria, Regional Manager, ECTAD-RAP, gave the opening remarks on behalf of the Chief Veterinary Officer and FAO. Country presentations focused on TADs status in their respective countries and a brief description of their veterinary services and how it responds to TADs

The lead countries for Foot and Mouth Disease, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) re-

ported on their progress.

Subhash Morzaria gave three presentations, respectively on FAO-OIE complementarities, the OWOH strategy, and the FAO component of the HPED project funded by European Commission. He gave a global perspective on the GF-TADs framework, and FAO's progress in promoting it, citing the activities and tools available for countries to use to move GF-TADs forward.

Under the session on *Way Forward*, Subhash presented the OWOH strategy and explained how it could synergize control efforts on TADs and other Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs).

Carolyn Benigno, Animal Health Officer, gave a presentation on the GF-TADs activities in Asia and chaired the session on country reports after which she gave a summary on the current situation of TADs, the status of diagnostic capacity, disease reporting and surveillance structure, government policies on control of TADs and constraints faced by countries on ASEAN priorities. CB also chaired the session on recommendations where the above points were reflected.

The recommendations on regional concerns focused on harmonizing disease control interventions, regional coordination and promotion of OWOH among others, while the national concerns focused on developing a comprehensive animal health strategy and pushing for more government support to animal health programmes.

Among other key issues that emerged, the ASEAN Sub-Regional Meeting decided to expand the ASEAN GF-TADs, coordinating work in the progressive control of TADs in the ASEAN Region.

From all of us at
ECTAD-RAP in Bangkok

*Wishing you and
your families all the
best for a peaceful
and fortunate new
year in 2010!*