

FAO hosted a one-day Launching Session in Beijing on 20 February, 2009, to bring together relevant partners at Ministry of Agriculture, China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center, National Animal Center for Disease Control, Harbin National Reference Laboratory, and Guangxi, Hunan, and Yunnan Provinces. This meeting launched Phase III of the USAID-funded project, including solidifying provincial participation. Further project activities, including trainings, workshops, and field work, were discussed. The first part of the project

– the live bird market sampling study – will begin in March 2009.



FAO HPAI veterinary epidemiologist Edith Marshall made a visit to the China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center in Qingdao, as part of a delegation with members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health. During this visit, CAHEC expressed interest in becoming an OIE Collaborating Center in partnership with CEAH, under the 'twinning program.' Development of China's National HPAI Surveillance Plan was also discussed with CAHEC staff.

## Lessons learned

The Launching Session has proven to be vitally important to explaining upcoming project plans and activities to all partners and gaining their involvement. Similar sessions need to be held in the future to keep national partners similarly informed and committed to participating in project activities.