

International Animal Health Experts Visiting China

Three animal health international experts Leslie Sims (disease manager, Australia), Giovanni Cattoli (laboratory specialist, OIE/FAO reference laboratory, Padova Italy) and Marisa Peyre (vaccine specialist, CIRAD, France) visited China from 9 to 19 of September to: Assess the current epidemiological situation in China, with a special focus on understanding AI geographical infection distribution within the country, assess the quality of the links between field and laboratory diagnosis, review the effectiveness of control activities including vaccines and vaccination policy and finally strengthen links with OFFLU laboratory network.



▲ Live bird market visited in Guangxi

The team had meetings with MOA, China Animal CDC (CACDC), China Animal Health and Epidemiology Centre (CAHEC) to discuss issues related to control and surveillance, vaccination and vaccine quality control, emerging animal disease management, disease reporting system and earlier warning systems. They also visited Guangxi province to meet with provincial authorities, visit live bird markets as well as provincial and county laboratories. In the framework of this mission, a scientific workshop on HPAI was held on 18th of September in the Sino - Japanese Youth Exchange Center, 21st Century Hotel, Beijing. A total of 17 participants attended the meeting from Harbin National Laboratory, CAHEC, CDC, MoA. During the meeting, issues relating to H5N1 prevention and control in China, Vaccine developments (2009 and beyond), New Molecular methodologies for avian influenza and the emergence of new strains were discussed at length and stimulated lively discussion and experience sharing.



▲ Scientific Workshop on HPAI,
Beijing 18 September

Lessons Learned

Among other things, the mission team members made the following recommendations for possible follow - up action to the FAO HPAI team:

- * Assessing and reducing the risk posed by spent layer hens
- * Ensuring the integrity of surveillance samples through the entire testing system
- * Assist in improving quality management of provincial and county level laboratories undertaking serosurveillance through additional training in Quality Management and support for ring testing
- * Studying the immune response in ducks provided with a single dose of vaccine
- * Providing training in detailed and informative analysis of genetic sequences from viruses using advanced bioinformatic tools which allow evolutionary and migration gene analysis in addition to the phylogenetic studies
- * Undertaking one or more local market chain studies to look at ways of improving traceability of poultry in retail markets and also to identify risk factors for infection
- * Support for modifications in surveillance testing and presentation of information on surveillance testing (including mapping of surveillance data on a background of the total poultry population in the area studied)

Upcoming Activities

- HPAI Project now has been extended to 30 September 2010, the next phase starts from 1st November 2009.
- The HPAI team will work on the work plan and plan for the activities to be undertaken in the next quarter.